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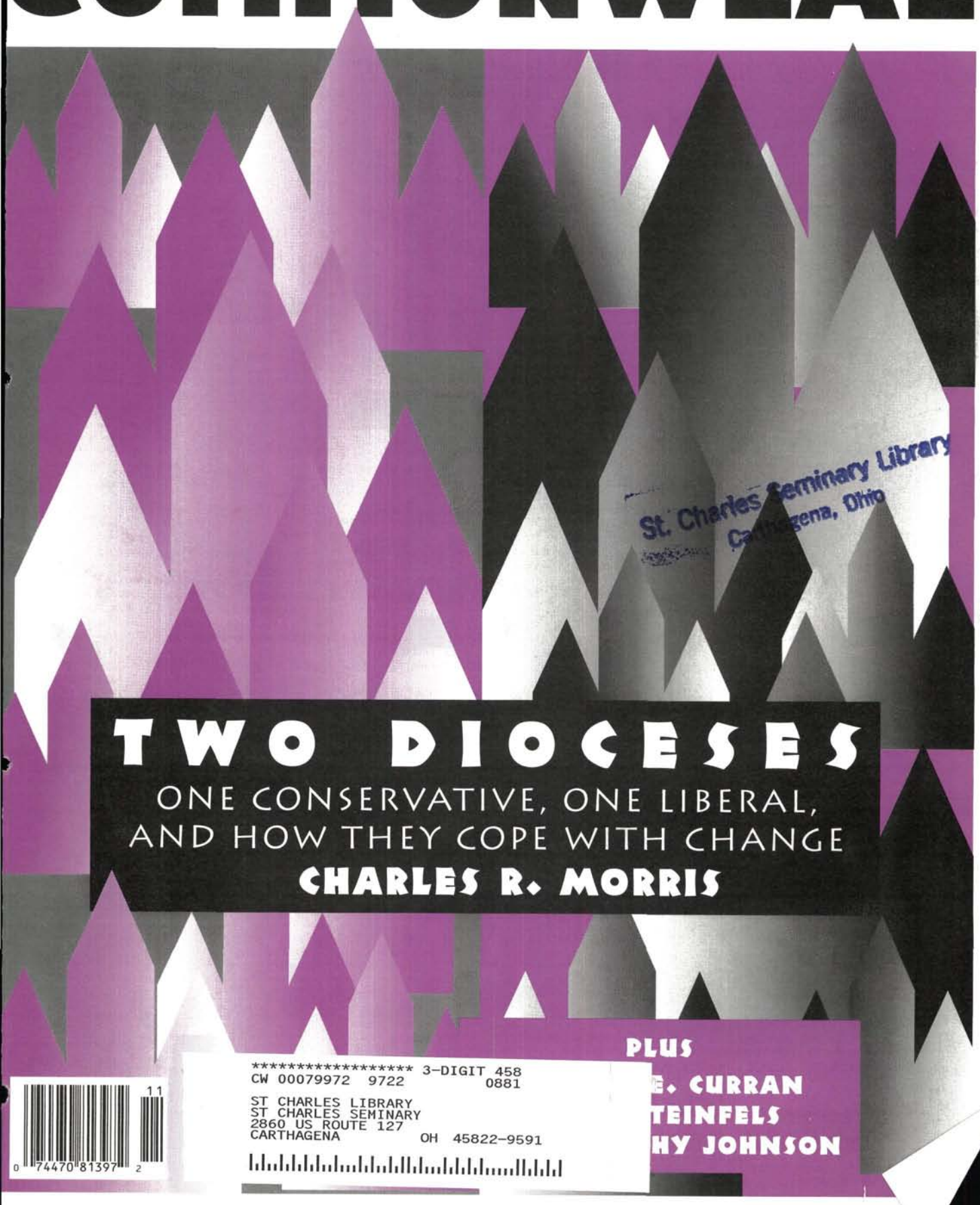

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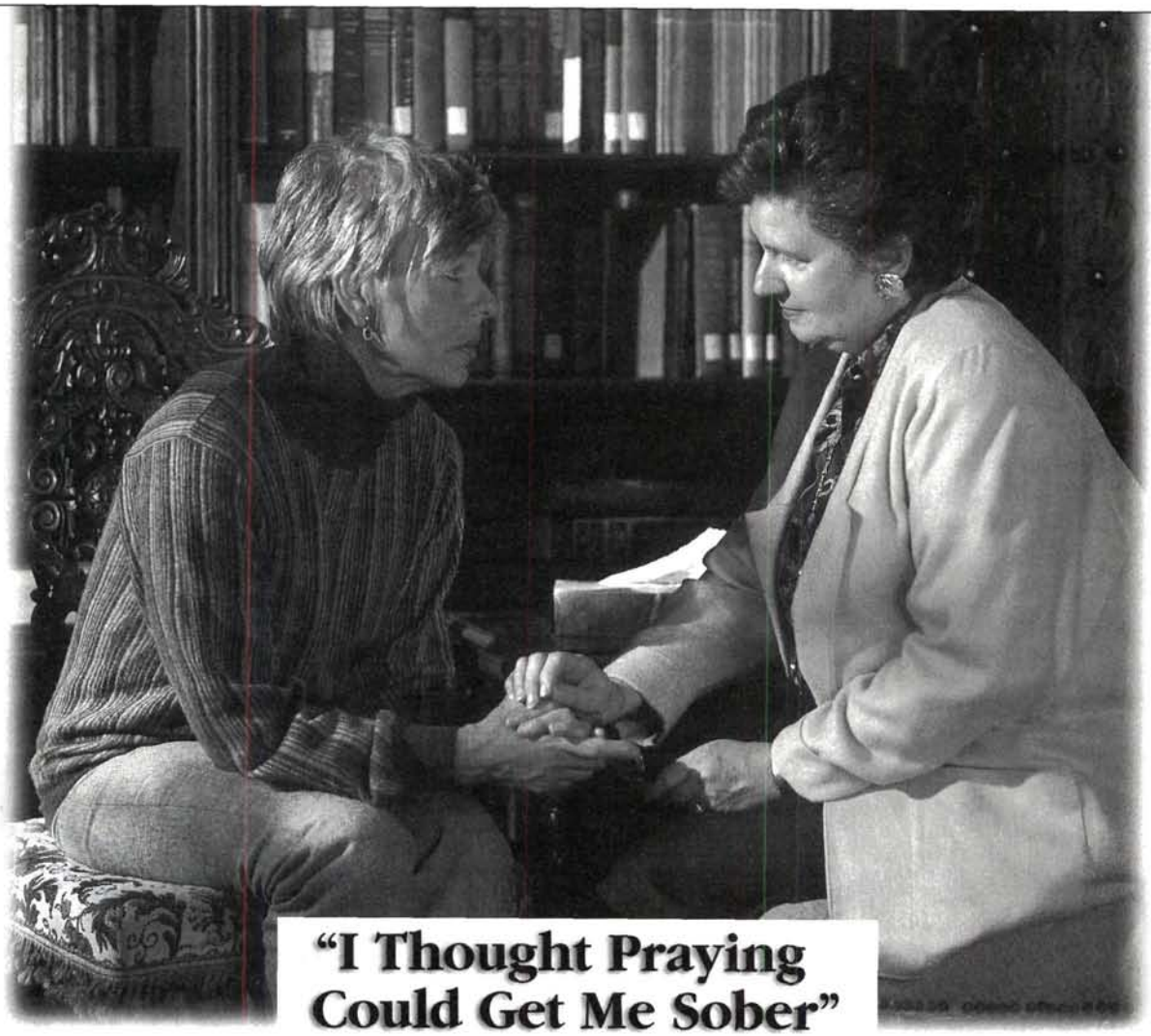

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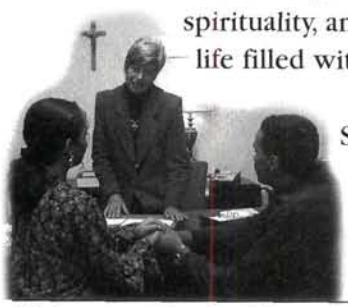

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COMMONWEAL

June 6, 1997 / Volume CXXIV, Number 11

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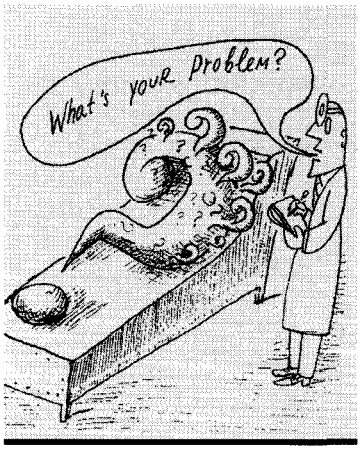

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To the Editors

What's in your name?

Perhaps I am revealing my ignorance of the church I was born into, but could you print an explanation of the name of your journal? I'd be pleased.

CAROL A. PROKOP
Chapel Hill, N.C.

From the editors: The definition we like best is: "The public good." Another: "The general welfare." Some people who don't greatly admire us spell it "Commonwail," and those who have never heard of us spell it "Commonwheel"!

Where do you stand?

I was intrigued to read in your April 25 issue that, in regard to abortion, you believe "there are difficult cases and possible exceptions." You also took the position that "more restrictive abortion laws would better serve to protect human life and dignity."

Commonweal has published a great deal on abortion over the years, but I have never seen you state clearly how you believe the law should read. Abortion is a complex and difficult issue, so it seems important that you answer the questions your statements left dangling.

First, what are the "difficult cases and possible exceptions" in which you apparently believe abortion is permissible? If you do not want to recriminalize all abortions, which ones would you like to see legally permitted? Which ones would you prohibit or, perhaps, restrict? What penalties would you suggest for the ones you would criminalize? If you believe in the moral equivalence of fetuses and persons, do you believe that the penalties should be the same as those for murder? Why or why not?

With your publication editorializing frequently on abortion and criticizing others' positions, it seems crucial to your own integrity that you go on record with your own position and live with its ambiguities and difficulties. I look forward to your response.

MAUREEN FIEDLER, S.L.
Brentwood, Md.

The writer is coordinator of Catholics Speak Out.

The editors reply:

Sister Maureen Fiedler is right: *Commonweal* has published a great deal on abortion. The discussion in the Catholic community on this subject has been wide-ranging and diverse, and our coverage has tried to reflect the serious moral and legal debate, to acknowledge the personal agonies occasioned by some pregnancies, and to make clear the cultural danger that abortion-on-demand presents. What we said in the April 25 reply to two letters, one from Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice, contained nothing new nor, in our view, anything very intriguing.

The difficult cases, as *Commonweal* has editorialized since *Roe* v. *Wade* [February 16, 1973], occur when a pregnancy threatens the life of a mother or results from rape or incest, or when a fetus is grievously damaged.

Commonweal editorials on the topic regularly treat law and morality as distinct but overlapping categories, and find the decision in *Roe* v. *Wade* both morally and legally indefensible. We have also published debates—for example, Sidney Callahan vs. Joan Callahan (no relation), and Daniel Maguire vs. James Burtchaell—and many other articles, columns, book reviews, and letters that the editors felt made a serious contribution to the discussion, whether the editors agreed with them or not.

It is also true, as our correspondent points out, that *Commonweal* has never spelled out its own legislative program or proposal. A journal of opinion typically responds editorially to the questions at hand—the bills before Congress, the cases before the Supreme Court, the events grabbing headlines. Although, as a tax-exempt organization, we do not attempt to "lobby" for specific measures, we have written favorably of approaches like the Hatch Amendment, or a reconsideration by the Supreme Court that would return abortion law to the states—recognizing the drawbacks of uneven legislation that would result. We welcomed restrictions of federal funding for abortions, again recognizing the ambiguities involved. And we have given favorable notice to a variety of other restrictions, such as the provisions for informed consent that the Court upheld in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, parental notification, waiting periods, and, most recently, the proposed ban on partial-birth abortions. We saw in these admittedly marginal measures at least some public recognition of the moral gravity of the abortion decision, and some reversal of the abortion-on-demand momentum created by *Roe* v. *Wade*.

Meanwhile, *Commonweal* has urged the prolife movement not only to spurn violence and rhetorical excess but to link its concerns with demands for changes in the social and economic conditions that propel so many women toward abortion. "Changes in the legal status of abortion, even of a fairly restrictive kind," we warned [May 5, 1989], "may not greatly reduce the number of abortion 'procedures.' The struggle over abortion is moral and cultural, social and economic, at least as much as it is legal."

Is it necessary for the integrity of our position, as Sister Fiedler suggests, that we go further, specifying restrictions, exceptions, and penalties in some model statute or Court decision? That might be useful, and individual writers in these pages have made attempts in that direction. But we believe it suffices that we have gone on record defending any number of concrete alternatives as better

(Continued on page 29)

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Unbalanced

At least two things can be said with certainty about the budget agreement reached between President Bill Clinton and the Republican Congress last month and now making its way through the various appropriations committees. First, balancing the federal budget by 2002 seems to exhaust the country's present capacity for political consensus. Second, the budget agreement promises to undermine, not strengthen, the long-term fiscal stability of the government and the nation.

Superficially, there is some good news in all of this. Burned by Clinton's skillful manipulation of the budget crisis in 1995, the Republican Congress is not about to close down the federal government again. Republican talk about eliminating whole federal departments and dismantling the welfare state has also been muted. In signing on to the budget agreement, the Republican leadership has at least tacitly accepted the current role played by the federal government in American life—a concession that the most fervently ideological Republicans in Congress are still resisting.

Given the Republican control of Congress, the president and the Democrats are in a weak bargaining position. Clinton has gotten the Democratic leadership to support cuts in Medicare spending ($115 billion, thus extending the system's solvency for a decade), while securing from the Republicans reductions in proposed military expenditures and veterans' benefits. In addition to these important compromises, the agreement also includes spending increases ($60 to $70 billion) for education, health insurance for poor children, tax credits for families with children, and money to help welfare recipients find jobs. A proposal to restore some benefits to legal immigrants cut by last year's welfare bill appears to have been one of the first casualties of the detailed negotiating process.

In principle then, the agreement makes a start, albeit meager, at reducing entitlement spending while increasing investment in areas such as education and health care for the poor. Most important, it has deepened the commitment of both political parties to fiscal discipline, and that discipline has doubtless contributed to the continuing growth of the American economy. An important consequence has been a continuing drop in unemployment and people on the welfare rolls.

Now for the bad news. Republican acquiescence to the agreement was purchased by Clinton's willingness to accept a broad range of tax-cutting schemes ($85 billion worth), including reductions in capital gains and inheritance taxes, whose benefits will go to wealthier Americans (even the child-care tax credit is largely a sop for the middle class). Worse, the costs of the tax cuts will increase dramatically after 2002, depriving the government of billions in revenue just as Social Security and Medicare spending for retiring baby-boomers begins to rise exponentially. Indeed, given the absence of significant reductions in these entitlement expenditures, some estimates have the federal deficit climbing from 2 percent of the GNP in 2002 to 14 percent in 2020.

The current booming economy, with a corresponding windfall in tax revenues,

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has allowed both Republicans and Democrats to avoid making any hard political choices about long-term entitlement spending. In the first round of budget negotiations, per-capita limits on Medicaid spending, reductions in cost-of-living adjustments, and other unpopular spending cuts were on the table. However, when the Congressional Budget Office announced that estimated tax revenues over the next five years would increase by $225 billion, both Republicans and Democrats were only too happy to drop the politically painful budget-cutting options and let the expanding economy balance the budget by itself. Some future Congress, it seems, will have to clean up after these short-term and near-sighted budget-balancers.

Obviously, the better alternative would be for Congress to take advantage of the nation's current economic prosperity and cut entitlement spending now when it would hurt the least. Military spending is also a good candidate for more trimming. But, as always, there is little political incentive to impose sacrifice when it is possible to postpone it. Even more disturbing, despite Clinton's largely symbolic success in increasing social spending, there seems little possibility that Washington will soon either extend a bigger hand to the poor or meaningfully expand federal investment in infrastructure or education.

For those concerned about the booming economy's exacerbation of the gap between rich and poor, much political work needs to be done. It can't be said often enough that a revitalized labor movement, one dedicated to winning a greater share of the pie for workers and exerting leverage at the national level, is the best hope for promoting true equality. Until the poor and the middle class rediscover their shared interests and common destiny, the budget will be balanced at their expense.

Business Manager: *Commonweal* is looking for a new business manager, someone with promotion and business skills committed to working with a small staff and a limited budget to ensure the financial future of the magazine. Previous experience with a magazine, small business, or nonprofit organization is a plus.

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OF SEVERAL MINDS

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

KINDER, GENTLER SWEATSHOPS

A martyr makes a difference

Readers may remember the valiant twelve-year-old Iqbal Masih of Pakistan whose courageous crusade for the human rights of the child laborers of his country aroused those of us in the first world to the dire situation of millions of children in the third ("By the Sweat of Kids' Brows," June 1, 1996). He awakened us, too, to our unwitting complicity in that situation via America's global industries. He reminded us that our clothes and our shoes are imported far too often from American-owned sweat shops abroad in which children (and adults too) work in shocking conditions.

Iqbal was made to work in a carpet factory when he was only four. He worked twelve hours a day, sometimes more, with a half-hour break for lunch. If he was ill or lagged behind, he was beaten or hung upside down. At the age of ten, with unusual spirit, he attended a meeting of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front and learned that his bondage was illegal. He obtained a "certificate of freedom" and began school and his fight to free other children. Iqbal was a martyr for his cause, shot while riding his bicycle—murdered, many think, because he had angered the wealthy and powerful "carpet masters."

In April, as the anniversary of Iqbal's death approached, Kamran Aslam Khan, minister of trade at the Embassy of Pakistan, in Washington, D.C., issued a letter marking the occasion "with profound grief and sorrow." Iqbal's contribution, Mr. Khan wrote, "in raising the general consciousness of human-rights issues and more specifically issues pertaining to the exploitation of children," has resulted in remedial initiatives the world over and, of course, in Pakistan.

Somewhat defensively, the minister

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reports on two surveys done in collaboration with the International Labor Organization that "have confirmed our conviction that the incidence of child labor in Pakistan is not of alarming proportions" and that "the figures quoted in the international media were absolutely incorrect." True, there are 3.5 million children employed in the country, but only 11 percent are in the manufacturing and transport sectors (the object of Iqbal's concern). The great majority—70 percent—are employed in "the informal sector...including family business, domestic service, home-based industries, shops, and small establishments." Another 19 percent are working in crafts and their sales.

But "whatever its magnitude," the minister concludes, "the government...is cognizant of the child-labor problem and is committed to combat it through programs designated to implement laws, coupled with measures to rehabilitate the...children after withdrawal from their place of work." (Skeptics should remember that Iqbal won his freedom through the Bonded Labor Liberation Front, which had its source in the Bonded Labor System [Abolition] Act passed in 1992, and that he attended a BLLF school.) The other initiatives in Pakistan, listed by the minister, are impressive.

Whether by coincidence or design, Mr. Khan's report was issued at about the same time as a White House report on an agreement of several U.S. companies—including Nike and Liz Claiborne—to promulgate a set of minimum standards for their overseas plants and subcontractors. The agreement had its roots in a meeting last August when President Bill Clinton and then-Secretary of Labor Robert Reich called together representatives of the apparel and shoe industries, trade unions, a consumer federation, and religious and human-rights organizations. They were asked to prepare a plan to promote humane working conditions here and overseas. It was also an acknowledgment of the fact that sweatshops overseas are beyond the reach of U.S. law but not beyond the influence of U.S. companies with factories abroad.

In addition to the agreement of companies to issue standards, the participants agreed that the commission as a whole was to become a nonprofit foundation monitoring compliance. And the commission was to enlist companies not part of the first gathering, as well as other companies beyond the manufacturers of apparel and shoes. The pledged standards, though termed minimum, were significant: to end child labor and forced labor; to provide a safe and healthy working environment; to guarantee the rights to organize and to collective bargaining.

"Why don't we all chip in and get him an outboard motor?"

Almost at once, some human-rights groups were up in arms. They said, among other things, that the commission had only succeeded in getting "a kinder, gentler sweat shop." Why accept, for example, the legal minimum wage of various countries—which fall far short of meeting workers' needs (seventy cents, for example)—instead of imposing a living minimum wage? Was it not outrageous to tolerate sixty-hour workweeks with only one day off? And why not demand complete independence for those who monitor working conditions?

Unfortunately, the "kinder, gentler" workplace is an achievable first step and many workers will be glad for it. It is a constructive beginning. Only continued public pressure on this issue will make the commission succeed. *It behooves all people of conscience to contribute to that pressure.* Some companies have complied not so much out of good will but because of bad publicity. Even at the time of the report, Indonesian police were battling Nike workers who were demonstrating because they purportedly were not being paid the legal $2.50 minimum wage. And in Vietnam it was reported that young women making Nike sneakers were earning less per day than the cost of an adequate diet.

Pressure against sweat shops and the concomitant abuse of human rights is, alas, needed in this country too. Here the pressure must focus on the uncovering of sweat shops and the enforcement of the existing laws. How soon we have forgotten the discovery of the factory on the West Coast and the enslavement of Thai women immigrants there.

Representative George Miller (D-Calif.) has recently introduced legislation to impose federal minimum-wage and immigration laws on the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory. The government there, he said, has allowed sweat-shop conditions, forced prostitution, and the exploitation of foreign workers. Noting the recently announced agreement of the U.S. manufacturers and the administration in regard to sweat shops overseas, he said, "Those efforts must also forcus on our own soil, on the CNMI, where conditions that could not be tolerated anywhere else in America flourish with the blessings of the local government." □

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Peter Steinfels

MURRAY KEMPTON, R.I.P.

The journalist of Original Sin

Several lives ago, when I was a graduate student working at *Commonweal* and living on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, I received Murray Kempton's copy of *Commonweal*, stuck to my own, in the mail.

I was, of course, thrilled. I was a relatively recent admirer of Kempton, won over by views that defied all categories of sixties' politics and a prose style that defied all expectations of any newspaper columnist, let alone one for a tabloid.

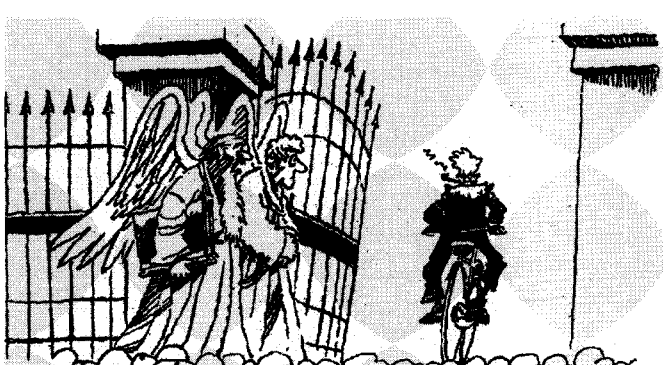
Like many others I was entranced by the serpentine twists and turns of his sentences, the sly comparisons in their coils, the sting in the tail, the play of allusion like the glints of light that those revolving spheres send dancing around a ballroom.

If his overall sympathies were liberal, it was a liberalism born out of resistance to prevailing powers, which often meant the prevailing liberalism as well. If his prose savored the deliberately archaic, that too was a happy contrast to the easy populism of his tabloid employer, the *New York Post*, or the breathless flow of the New Journalists.

I really don't remember what happened after I hand-delivered his copy of *Commonweal* to his apartment building a few blocks away. I think I had attached a note and received a gracious thanks in return. I was left with the glow of an archetypical New York Moment.

In the years that followed, sightings of Kempton at New York political gatherings or riding his bicycle around the neighborhood were frequent. What sticks in my mind, however, was a midtown press conference called by the Reverend Robert H. Schuller, pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Orange County, California, inheritor of the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale's gospel of positive thinking, and the latest accessory of the Clinton White House.

Dr. Schuller was accompanied by George H. Gallup, Jr. The two were announcing the findings of a recent poll showing, as I recall, that religious faith was good for self-esteem and self-esteem was good for religious faith. The preacher and the pollster were elated.



"Wouldn't you know it—Kempton refuses to wear wings!"

About this time Kempton shuffled into the session. He seemed to be having a hard time picking up the thread. He admitted to not knowing much about polls and he made no pretense to piety, but wasn't Christianity supposed to impress us with our status as sinners, from which we had been mercifully redeemed? What was all this about self-esteem?

Schuller and Gallup did their best to relieve this ignorance, plying the newsman with more findings from the poll and more information about the value of self-esteem. The latecomer replied with a few phrases from the New Testament and, again, with some unpleasant references to sin. He may even have thrown in some wisdom gleaned from a Jamaican cab driver. He persisted in using words like *pride, meek, guilt*—and in suspecting out loud that what America needed was not more self-esteem but less.

For this obduracy Schuller and Gallup were totally unprepared; they seemed as uncomprehending of the puzzled gentleman's difficulties as he was uncomprehending of their enthusiasm. The exchange quickly took on a comic aspect. This was not disagreement. It was a gulf. It was, in fact, two parts of the American soul speaking completely past one another. Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin. Henry Adams and Horatio Alger.

It could be said that Kempton was the journalist of Original Sin, not the half-doctrine that conservatives employ to dismiss the complaints of the dispossessed and their striving for a break, but the two-edged teaching that cuts even more against the established than the utopian. Richard Severo's superb obituary in the *New York Times* quoted Walter Goodman: "Whatever the politics of the case, Mr. Kempton can be counted on to choose the victims over their tormentors. His disgust with the uses of power," Goodman continued, "grows from a conviction that every society is so inherently unjust that all the winners may be suspect."

But Kempton was also a journalist of Wonder, and much of that wonder arose from the improbable signs of redemption that he kept spying in such a sinful world. The Introduction to his last collection of articles, *Rebellions, Perversities, and Main Events* (Times Books, 1994), basks in his more than three-score-and-ten of "life's epiphanies." He typically sums up his good fortune by recalling a Basin Street conversation with Louis Armstrong about Armstrong's recording of "When You're Smilin'." Said Armstrong: "There's kicks everywhere."

It was a balance that Kempton not only maintained to the last but beyond. "I should like my burial service," he had petitioned the Episcopal Church of Saint Ignatius of Antioch on Manhattan's Upper West Side, "to follow as closely as its rector deems fit the Order of the Burial of the Dead prescribed by the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, which can be found in my bookcase."

So on May 6 there were Anglican chant and Mozart and William Byrd, but no eulogies. There was Job: "Man that is

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born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower; he flieth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." And there was "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" and the "sure and certain hope of resurrection," through Jesus Christ "who shall change our vile body that it may be like to his glorious body." The name of "our dear brother Murray, here departed" was mentioned but twice, only, as he had requested, where the prayers required.

Resurrection, redemption, and glory; nothing about self-esteem. □

Peter Steinfels *writes the "Beliefs" column in the* New York Times *and is a visiting professor of history at Georgetown University.*

Gordon Marino

JUSTIFYING TORTURE

Why the Israelis are wrong

For years now the Israeli security forces have been using torture as a method of interrogation and, thanks to the lack of space in Israeli jails, as an alternative to prison sentences. Last month, a United Nations committee condemned Israel for permitting such methods. According to human-rights groups, between 1988 and 1994 Israeli security forces detained over 100, 000 Palestinian suspects, one-third of whom were violently interrogated and often severely beaten. To put flesh on these statistics, one repentant Israeli officer reports going into a village, rounding up over a dozen Palestinian youths, taking them to a nearby field, and breaking their arms and legs (*see* James Ron's "Rabin's Two Legends," *Index on Censorship*, September-October 1996). Gilad Anat, a cog in the harrowing machine, recalls:

> When we were driving toward the field they said to make certain that you hit the Arabs on the kneecap, since that was the way to make sure the leg would break. When it was over the Palestinians were left lying in the field, and the soldiers drove off in silence. I was surprised that none of the soldiers protested....

Security personnel report that, when they are instructed to try and beat the truth or spirit out of someone, the only restrictions they are given is, "Don't kill them," or at least not their bodies, for as Elain Scarry showed in her minor classic, *The Body in Pain*, torture can kill the spirit. When people are brought to a pitch of pain where they are willing to do anything to be released, including turning their loved ones over to their torturers, the body may endure but henceforth, "all is but toys; renown and grace are dead."

In a recent highly publicized case the Israelis did kill the body of a suspect, which prompted the Israeli High Court to place an injunction against the use of physical pressure as a method of interrogation. A day later the court acceded to a request from the legal council for the security forces to suspend the injunction, so that they could put the screws to someone whom they claimed to suspect of planning a terrorist action.

Whenever the issue of violent interrogation has come up in Israel, people of practical wisdom maintain that the use of force is necessary to extract information about terrorist activities that will in the end save the lives of many potential victims. In fact Andre Rosenthal, the lawyer who pressed for the suspension of the injunction, said: "No enlightened nation would agree that hundreds of people should lose their lives because of a rule saying torture is forbidden." Upon hearing that one of the High Court judges was playing Pilate and would not offer a ruling either for or against the use of physical force, Rosenthal fulminated, "That's the most immoral and extreme position I have heard in my life....[A] thousand people are about to be killed and you propose that we don't do anything." In the view of Rosenthal and many other Israelis, when you have someone in custody who may be able to tell you the whereabouts of a bomb that is ticking toward the loss of many innocent lives, it is the moral obligation of the state to do anything necessary to make him speak.

One would like to think that if citizens of a democracy really grasped what it was like to be beaten to the rim of death by servants of the state, they would rise up against such practices. Apparently not. Israelis know what is going on, and many of them either put their hands over their eyes or, like Rosenthal, have no qualms about the beatings.

But it is one thing not to protest and it is another legally to tolerate breaking heads. Or is it? While many Israelis are appalled by the use of violence, others argue that they are just being honest about a practice that is common to every police force in the world. Still others maintain that when the use of physical force is acknowledged by the state, it can be monitored and limited, but that when the use of hoods, prongs, and electric prods is covert, there is no mechanism to rein in professional pain makers.

One of the most popular strategies in teaching ethics courses is to prepare slides of each of the major moral paradigms, for example, divine-command theory, virtue ethics, deontological ethics, feminist ethics, or utilitarianism. With this approach, one points out the appeal and liabilities of each paradigm. For example, utilitarianism is the view that we are obligated to do whatever promotes the greatest good for the greatest number of people. As with the other moral lenses, there are a number of cracks in the utilitarian position. The most commonplace objection to utilitarianism is that it would seem to commend and command acts which we would otherwise judge to be unjust. For instance, if by routinely torturing criminal suspects one could extract information which would promote national security, then, according to the utilitarian position, we ought to torture criminal suspects.

However, most of us believe that individuals have rights which would be trammeled by a policy of torture first and ask questions later. Most of us would consider the utilitari-

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an notion that it is permissible to torture individuals for the good of the community as an argument against utilitarianism. Indeed, we would consider anyone who floated a bill to sanction torture to be "morally challenged." Just such a bill has been drawn up by Israeli legislators, but has not yet been submitted to Parliament.

The debate over sanctioning torture, or as some would prefer to euphemize it "the use of physical force," has been burbling for quite some time now in Israel. As the liberal Israeli magazine *Challenge* tells it, proponents of interrogation by ordeal invariably invoke the "ticking bomb scenario"—that is, the situation in which a terrorist action has been planned and a suspect is in custody who could provide the information that would stop the action. The suspect will not cooperate, and the hour and minute hands of the clock are circling, seemingly faster and faster. According to Roni Ben Efrat (*Challenge*, No. 41) and others, it does not take a ticking bomb to get either the Israeli or the even less-discriminating forces of the Palestinian Authority to start shaking people's heads (a common form of violent interrogation) to the brink of death and once in a while over the brink. Just the same, Efrat argues that even in the ticking bomb situation it is unlikely that torture will work:

> For it is a cardinal assumption of this scenario that the prisoner is one of the two or three people who know where the bomb is and when it will go off. He knows, therefore, exactly how long he has to hold out. Being dedicated he will mislead his interrogator until it's too late— or until his colleagues have changed the plan.

Thus, it could be argued that torture should be prohibited not because it is inherently evil but rather because it is not efficacious. After all, some are able to remain silent even while their very ability to communicate is being melted in pain. Others will spill misleading beans of information. And heaven only knows what someone will say who lacks the information that others are trying to torture out of him. Finally, one could viably argue that, while torturing suspects may save lives in the short run, adopting a policy of torture will imbrute the whole society and eventually produce more pain than it spares. From a utilitarian perspective, whether or not violent interrogation is anathema or obligatory is an empirical question. But is the utilitarian perspective the right one?

In the intellectual badminton that occurs in ethics courses one player will inevitably serve the idea that, even if it were possible to save five people by euthanizing and harvesting the organs of a reprobate one, it would still be wrong to kill the one to save the many. The riposte is usually, "But suppose it were a million against one." At this juncture, feminists such as Nel Noddings complain that only a man would think of testing a theory by flinging far-fetched examples against it. For Noddings and others, decontextualized thought experiments are unilluminating. And yet I think those of us who believe that murder and torture are inherently wrong would have to concede that murder and torture would remain wrong even when the consequences of refraining from murder and torture are murderous. Socrates taught that, for our soul's sake, it is better for the individual himself to suffer an injustice than it is to do an injustice, better for him to be killed by a terrorist than it is to kill innocent people in an attempt to prevent being killed by terrorists. And yet this begs the utilitarian claim that notions of justice were developed by humans to serve human ends and that any course of action that leads to the inhuman consequence of putting the interests of an individual above the community is necessarily unjust.

I suspect that when the Israeli proponents of violent interrogation read that Americans find their practices morally repugnant, they will mutter words to the effect, "Americans would think differently if they had to worry about their children being killed by a bomb on the way to school!" No doubt that is true, which only goes to show that the horde of us are weak vessels who cannot help but feel and act as though the need to secure the safety of our own children trumps all other considerations—including the needs of other people to protect their children. During the first seventy years of this century, over four thousand African-Americans were lynched in the United States. When these killings took place there were, no doubt, white people who had the impulse to resist mob violence, only they resisted that impulse because they feared putting their own children in harm's way.

Though the use of torture on prisoners of war is prohibited by the Geneva Convention, Israeli advocates of the use of physical force base their claim on what they take to be their extraordinary security situation. That is, they give the impression that if matters were otherwise, if there were no cloud of terrorism hanging over their heads, they would not sue for tolerance of torture. And yet, if situation ethics is good for the Israeli it must also be good for the Palestinian. If the notion that what is hideous in one circumstance is acceptable or even commendable in another holds for people on one side of the Jordan, it must also hold for people on the other. All Israelis condemn acts of terrorism. However, by the logic of their own implicit argument, those who want the state to bless instruments of torture would have to agree that, if the Palestinians can show good reason for believing that the only way to protect their own lives and the lives of their children is to engage in acts of terrorism, then the Israelis could not condemn, with moral consistency, the planting of bombs on buses.

Indeed, so far as the Palestinians are concerned, the fact that the State of Israel is poised to give its legal blessing to acts which, if committed against a pet, would suffice to have the owner jailed, is very good reason for Palestinians to believe that in their relations with the Israelis no act should be morally proscribed. The very criterion that some Israelis invoke to sanction beating after beating after beating can also be invoked to sanctify the very acts which the beatings are intended to suppress. □

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A TALE OF TWO DIOCESES

From Lincoln to Saginaw

Charles R. Morris

Sexual innuendoes have added a nasty edge to the ideological struggles within the American Catholic church. Most noticeably, concerns over pedophilia and clerical sexuality have thrown the question of priestly celibacy into sharp relief. Is it true that in the modern era the celibacy requirement will draw only men "who haven't worked out their own sexual identities," as the University of Notre Dame's outspoken liberal theologian the Reverend Richard McBrien puts it? "You should visit Lincoln," McBrien told me during a recent interview, "then you'll see what's really going on." The very conservative diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, is famous for recruiting disproportionately large numbers of priests.

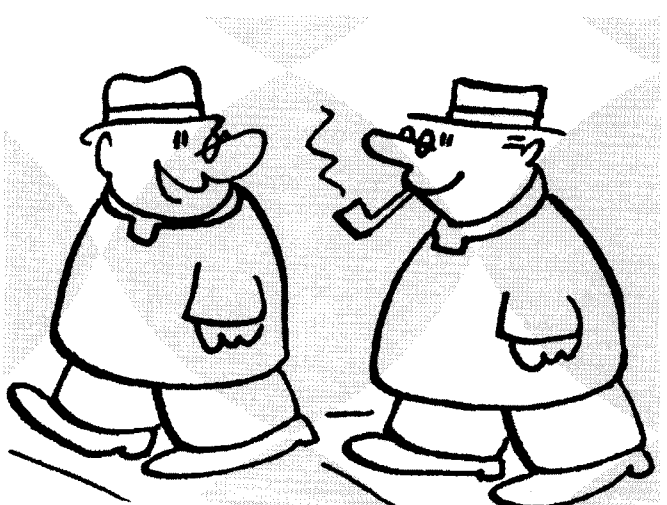
I was struck that Joseph Fessio, S.J., founder and director of the conservative Ignatius Press, gave me exactly the same instruction. "You should visit Lincoln," he said. "Then you'll see a church that works."

So I visited Lincoln.

Nebraska in winter is painted with a palette of gray and white. The sky is gray, presaging snow. In the fields that stretch off on every side, gray patches of soil peek through the snow, and the winter's corn stubble is a bleached-out gray and white and dun. It is very cold. Lincoln is the state capital, a prosperous university town in the southeastern corner of the state, with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Nebraska occasionally elects liberal politicians, like Bob Kerrey, the present senator and former governor, but like most of the agrarian Midwest, it is a natural home of bedrock conservatism. Geographically, the state is an irregular rectangle about 350 miles long, divided roughly in half in the long direction, east to west, by the Platte River. All of Nebraska south of the Platte is assigned to the diocese of Lincoln, so the diocese is shaped like an eel with its head in the east and an attenuating tail of little farm towns, many with only a few hundred souls, stretching all the way to Wyoming in the west. About 15 percent of the people in southern Nebraska are Catholic, rising to about 25 percent in Lincoln.

The Lincoln chancery office is a modest one-story building in the shadow of a surprisingly modernistic cathedral in one of the city's better residential neighborhoods. On an evening in December 1995, twenty-one of Lincoln's theology-level seminarians had assembled to get their religious teaching assignments for the Christmas vacation period. Altogether Lincoln had thirty-nine men in advanced stages of seminary training, a remarkable number for a small diocese. Too small to operate its own seminary, Lincoln farms its students out, mostly to Dunwoodie in New York, Saint Charles in Philadelphia, and Saint Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland, the big three of conservative theology. The session at the chancery took about an hour—mostly details about transportation, curricula, and dress code (black suits and ties or Roman collars) interrupted by chaffing about who was likely to oversleep or get lost. I was a fly on the wall, somewhat awkwardly introduced as a visiting writer. After the session almost all of us repaired to the Newman Center at the university for pizza and beer.

Altogether, I spent about four hours with the group. I didn't interview each one, but I was able to watch them interact with each other, I had some lengthy round-table discussions with shifting groups of four or five at a time, and I talked with a few individuals in some depth. They were, frankly, an impressive group of young men. They were not effeminate. They did not seem to be "unhealthy" or im-



"Saint Thomas Aquinas is all very well, but I get my best material from Spencer Tracy."

Charles R. Morris *is the author of many books, including* Time of Passion: America 1960-80. *This essay is adapted from* American Catholic, *published this month.* *© 1997 by Charles R. Morris. Reprinted by permission of Times Books.*

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Edward C. Lynskey

Mrs. Lincoln's Epistle from Bellevue Place

Mary Todd Lincoln, a frequent correspondent most of her adult life, curiously never wrote any extant letters during her incarceration at the insane asylum, Bellevue Place, from May 20, 1875 to September 10, 1875.

At lamplighting the Indian maid Little
Pinkie slinks under a prairie dog moon
to tie up my wits end. What now? More
morphia? Yes, that's the solution made
famous in your "Hospital for the Insane
of the Private Class." I'll never dip
my quill deep down a poisoned ink phial

to spell out my soul's sores for Matron
to clutch up to a candle, poring over my
sentences to hang me, Mary the Madwoman.
Robert whistles up on the Electric Express
in his shyster's swank for our promenade.
Chicago's moiling gales subvert his cheer.
I mew, "Life's a bed of roses." He rasps

"I abhor the night." Before sun-go-down
he's gone. "She dons gloves for repast,"
Dr. Pliny Earle scribbles in his ledger.
Crochet again today? Chinaman's marbles
tonight? Red rice tomorrow? Tally ho!
"Come here," I murmur to my mate recalled
by the door, "Lay your bones inside mine."

mature, or to have rigidly dependent personalities. The ones I talked to did not come from broken homes or problem families. Their theology was very orthodox, as all of Lincoln's theology is, but no one sounded fanatical. As in any group of twentysomethings, some were more gregarious and self-confident than others. Raymond Jansen could pass for an Ivy League swim team captain, but his shoulder span came from hauling bricks on construction sites, not from swimming. The presence and professional directness of Chris Kubat, the oldest at thirty-eight, was striking; but he is a board-certified urologist who jettisoned a thriving practice, an active social life, and a contemplated marriage because "the call became too strong." In my mind's eye, I put the whole group in suits and ties and envisioned them in a training program for Wall Street junior executives. They did fine. If a daughter brought one of them home, a father would be perfectly content. Any bishop would kill to get them.

The ratio of active priests to Catholics in Lincoln is about 1:700, more than half again higher than in the rest of the country. From the diocesan directory, I calculated the median age of active priests to be about forty-three, an astonishing twelve or thirteen years younger than the national median. About a third of the priests are under thirty-five. The diocesan chancellor, Monsignor Timothy Thorburn, is forty-two. After meeting so many older priests in my visits to other dioceses, the succession of recruitment-poster priests in their midthirties was almost disorienting. Lincoln's recruiting secrets offer real insights into the choices faced by the American church.

The Reverend Joseph Nemec (a Czech name, pronounced "Nemetz") is slender, with a boyish face, and at thirty-nine is young to be a pastor even in Lincoln. His church, Saint Teresa's, is in a strongly Catholic, middle-class section of the capital. Like many of Lincoln's priests, Nemec was raised on a farm, one of nine children in a staunchly Catholic family. Elementary school was in a one-room country schoolhouse, but all of the children attended a tuitioned Catholic high school. Nemec is a musician, like his father, and he went to the University of Nebraska as a music major. "I had never thought of being a priest," he said. "I wanted to get married, have a large family, and teach music." But he became involved with the Newman Center at the university and was recruited for the seminary from there.

Nemec insisted that he is *orthodox*, not conservative. "In Lincoln," he said, "we follow the pope. A whole string of popes have said that artificial birth control is seriously sinful, so that's what we tell people. We don't preach on it every week, because that could get counterproductive, but we do preach it consistently. Missing Mass is sinful, so that's what we tell people. The church teaches that there are mortal sins, and you go to Hell for them, so that's what we teach. It's all in the *Catechism*. Lincoln isn't inventing anything. We just teach the official doctrines." Saint Teresa's has three Masses a day, and the children in parochial school go every morning. There are confessions six days a week, with a full schedule on Saturdays. The tuition in the school is only $100 a year, and almost all Catholic children are enrolled.

We talked about recruitment, and problems in the seminaries, and I was struck that Nemec shared many of the same views as much more liberal priests I had interviewed across the country. "If you don't know what you're about, if it's simply 'Come one, come all,' then you're naturally going to have problems," Nemec said. But Lincoln has a clear idea of the men it is looking for: "Men who love the church, who are submissive and obedient, who are true servants of the

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Lord, who want to bring people to Jesus, who have a sense of the sacred." He continued, "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the greatest prayer on earth, it is the re-enactment of Calvary. And, yes, we expose and adore the Blessed Sacrament here." (Blessed Sacrament devotions have fallen into desuetude in many parishes.)

The "submissive and obedient" in the list of priestly virtues caught my attention, for Nemec is a very self-confident young man, with not a trace of eyes-cast-down monkishness. I asked about the lay role in the parish, and, in light of his very youthful appearance, about his relationship with his parishioners. "I'm their *father*," he said. I said, "You're thirty-nine and look even younger and you're their father?" He was not at all abashed. "Yes, I'm their father. That's what a pastor is." And he went on, "We're very participative here, but, as in any good Catholic family, parents love their children and still control them. They need to be told what's right and wrong with the love and care of a father." Nemec's "submissive and obedient" attitude, that is, flowed in a clear, straight line. Children honor and obey their parents. Parents honor and obey their pastor. Pastors honor and obey their bishop. And bishops honor and obey the pope, who speaks for Jesus Christ.

"Obedience" is not a virtue that is much prized in America. Among religious liberals, "orthodox" occasionally sounds like a code word for "neurotic." I met some Catholic conservatives who struck me as unusually rigid people, but the best ones—like Nemec, Joseph Fessio, or Ralph Martin, a Charismatic leader—are anything but lobotomized robots. They are conservative by intellectual conviction, not psychological compulsion. Fessio says, "Christ handed on his teaching authority to Saint Peter, and it descended through Peter to the popes. Vatican II confirmed very clearly that Catholics, and especially priests, owe religious assent to what the pope teaches."

The commitment to strict orthodoxy and to obedience comes bundled with a very exalted view of the priesthood. In Lincoln, priests are *fathers*, not parish coordinators, team leaders, or therapy directors. There are subtle touches in the liturgy that reinforce the priest's apartness. The solemnly paced consecration, the use of a bell, the priest's genuflection before the host and chalice, all underline the magical quality of the Mass. More than just father, the priest is also shaman and sacral figure. If he is submissive and obedient to his superiors, he expects the same from his flock, not because he is thirty-nine-year-old Joseph Nemec, but because he is the local spokesman of a vast salvific enterprise—of the one true church, the chosen vessel for an eternal deposit of faith bequeathed directly from the hand of Christ. Being a priest in Lincoln, in short, is a *good job*, and if only a fraction of 1 percent of well-balanced, college-capable, eligible-age-group Catholic males decide that the spiritual, emotional, and personal payoffs are worth the price of celibacy, Lincoln will continue to turn out plenty of trophy priests.

Lincoln is also one of the few dioceses that is successfully recruiting nuns. The diocese has its own two orders of teaching nuns; they are small, with just a couple of dozen women each, but are big enough to make an impact on the parochial school system. I drove out to one motherhouse on a Sunday afternoon and visited with Mother Joan Paul, who is about thirty-five—the order's median age is about thirty-two—and three of the other sisters. Their convent life is the traditional mix of prayer, study, and teaching, and they wear a full habit. If you're going to be a nun, they said, be a nun! Why join an order if you're going to look and act just like everybody else? They'd all been to secular universities before joining the order, they all held master's degrees from the University of Nebraska, and they were bright and funny young women—effectively, the female counterparts of the Lincoln seminarians and priests.

The orthodox character of the Lincoln diocese, and its single-minded commitment to vocational recruitment, are the legacy of Glennon Flavin, a strong-willed bishop who ruled Lincoln for twenty-five years until his retirement in 1992. His replacement, Fabian Bruskewitz, an archconservative with an extensive Roman background, is clearly not tampering with a successful formula. Bruskewitz made national headlines in early 1996 by threatening to excommunicate Catholics who joined a long list of proscribed organizations, like Planned Parenthood, or "Call to Action," a Catholic liberal organization.

But the real secret of Lincoln's recruiting success is Monsignor Leonard Kalin, who doubles as vocations director and director of the University of Nebraska Newman Center, the social and religious center for Catholic students on the Lincoln campus. Kalin is in his midsixties, with a gray crew-cut, one of three priest-brothers from a large Nebraska farm family. His strong presence and personality still showed clearly through a serious case of Parkinson's disease that has left him unsteady on his feet and able to speak only in a whisper. Kalin was assigned to the Newman Center in 1968. Flavin, who was a new bishop, was convinced that the center was a hotbed of liturgical experimentation and heterodoxy, so he ordered Kalin in to create an orthodox operation. Kalin carried out the mission, doubled the student membership, and has reigned ever since as a combination guru, social director, and aggressive recruiter of priests and nuns. Over the years, he has directed 435 University of Nebraska students into the convent or the seminary. Almost all the priests I met in Lincoln, almost all the teaching nuns, and the great majority of the seminarians were Kalinites, as the Reverend Robert Barnhill, the diocesan family life director, put it with a grin.

It is hard to overstate the advantages of the Kalin/Newman Center pipeline. The average Lincoln seminarian has spent two or three years at the University of Nebraska before entering the seminary. The Lincoln campus is at the top of the state system, so they are *prima facie* academically qualified. Since Kalin does nothing by halves, the center's social agenda is very active, and all the Kalinites have at least some dating experience. When I asked Kalin about homosexuality,

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he said, "I get to know a candidate pretty well before I recommend him to the seminary, and if I think someone is an active homosexual, I'll take him aside and we'll agree that the priesthood isn't for him. On the other hand, Bishop Flavin always said that he didn't care what someone's inclinations were, as long as he was sincerely committed to a chaste life." On pedophilia, he said there had been one case where parishioners complained about a priest's suspicious behavior; the man was reassigned and kept under observation, "but he was from New York."

Kalin's system reinforces itself in a virtuous feedback cycle. Kalin himself serves as a kind of personal glue to weld the priests and seminarians from the Newman Center into a cohesive, high-morale, mutually supportive body. The esprit facilitates recruitment, and the relatively large numbers prevent isolation, even in rural areas. "Notice the way we use titles," Kalin told me. "I've known Joe Nemec for twenty years, but I call him 'Father,' not 'Joe,' and he calls me 'Monsignor.' Bishop Flavin always insisted on that. You go around the rest of the country, and you see parishioners calling pastors by their first names. But if the priesthood isn't an elevated position, if you're just a spiritual coordinator and social director, why would you give up marriage, family, and all the rest?"

A church that can accommodate a Remes, an Untener, a McBrien, and a Fessio will be a much richer institution....

By any institutional measure, the Lincoln system is a smashing success—Fessio was clearly right. But I doubt that it is widely replicable. In the first place, Lincoln itself is a very small diocese in a very conservative setting. Mostly conservative Protestant pressure had prevented the opening of abortion clinics until just a few months before my visit. The parishioners I met at Saint Teresa's stressed how conservative they were. "This is a middle-class conservative parish," one of them told me. "It's kind of Catholic ghetto, but we like it that way." One of the teaching nuns mentioned that it was harder to maintain Saint Teresa's level of cohesiveness in more affluent neighborhoods. Most of the priests and nuns I talked to came from small-town farm families, and were natural social conservatives. When I asked Barnhill what his career goal was—Barnhill is a diocesan officer, he studied in Rome, and is much traveled—he said, "I want to be a country parish priest in the kind of town I grew up in. That's all, just a country parish priest." The Kalin recruiting pipeline is unique, and his powerful personality is clearly a factor in its success. Whether it can survive his retirement is questionable.

More important, Lincoln has maintained the high status of its priests partly by excluding women from the ministry. Flavin insisted that lectors and acolytes be formally "installed" according to canonical procedures that limit the eligible pool to men. Saint Teresa's was the first parish I'd been to in my travels where the liturgy was an all-male affair—the entry procession, ushers, readers, the acolyte, altar boys, eucharistic ministers. Flavin justified the policy, I was told, on recruiting grounds; many lectors and acolytes go on to the seminary. Bruskewitz has recently authorized women lectors and acolytes in cases of necessity, and, since the Vatican has now officially approved altar girls, some Lincoln parishes have begun using them. When I asked parishioners about the exclusion of women, they seemed a bit embarrassed, but assured me that it "was not a problem" in Lincoln. Mother Joan Paul told me women went along with Lincoln's male-oriented policies because they had been "properly educated." Nemec said, just as the Vatican says, that women and men simply have different roles in the church, and that in any event there is no higher status than motherhood. It would have been interesting to see him explain that to, say, the young women in Richard McBrien's theology seminar at Notre Dame. Even very conservative Catholic women in another diocese run on the Lincoln model, Arlington, Virginia, were infuriated when their daughters were told they couldn't serve on the altar.

The Lincoln system is precisely in line with the model of the church that many conservatives—and possibly the Vatican—appear to insist is the only permissible one. To place the conservative and liberal models of the church in sharper relief, I visited another parish, in another midwestern, fairly conservative city, but in Bishop Kenneth Untener's very liberal diocese of Saginaw.

Saginaw is in central Michigan, roughly at the cusp of the state's gradual metamorphosis from its industrial Rust Bowl southern half into the pristine wilderness to the north. With an economy based partly on small-farm agriculture and partly on heavy industry, it has a tatterdemalion, down-at-the-heels, red-brick look. The Catholic share of the population, at about a third, is higher than the national average, but typical for a Rust-Belt diocese. Saginaw's total Catholic population is about three times that of Lincoln's.

Sister Honora Remes (also Czech, pronounced "Remesh") is the "pastoral administrator"—the term of art for a nonordained person functioning as a parish pastor—of the cathedral parish of Saint Mary's in Saginaw. She is a tall, graceful woman in her late fifties, with short brown hair and an arc-light smile, whose working uniforms are dark, midcalf-length business suits. About two thousand American parishes, or about 10 percent of the total, are without priests, but most are small, and are served by priests from neighboring parishes. About three hundred parishes are run by pastoral administrators. Most of the pastoral administrators are women, and most of the women are nuns. The diocese of Seattle, for instance, has ten pastoral administrators, while Saginaw has eight. All of them are women, and nine of the ten in Seattle, and seven out of the eight in Saginaw, are nuns.

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A pastoral administrator does everything a pastor does, except say Mass and administer the sacraments. She hires the staff, manages the finances and budget, provides counseling and advice to parishioners, oversees the liturgies, and supervises the religious, social, and educational programs. A few of the pastoral administrators in Seattle have resident curates on their staffs, but, more frequently, the Mass and sacraments are provided by visiting priests, known as "sacramental ministers." Canon law requires every parish to have a "canonical pastor" who is a priest; in Saginaw, Bishop Untener serves as the canonical pastor for the parishes run by administrators.

In the Masses I attended at Saint Mary's, the sacramental minister was the Reverend Bert Groh, a chancery priest in his forties. Remes preceded Groh in the entry processional, and, during the first part of the Mass, the two stood side by side in front of the altar and took turns leading the prayers. After Remes read the Gospel and preached the homily, she stepped down from the altar until it was time for Communion. She was the lead lay eucharistic minister, then returned to the altar for the final prayers and the exit procession. It all looked smooth and natural. At one Mass, I was sitting near some elderly ladies, and I leaned over and whispered, "I'm just visiting, who is she?" One of them answered, "She's the pastor—well I'm not sure what she's called—but she's in charge of everything, except that Father Groh comes in to say Mass." Another lady looked at me narrowly, as if I might be from the testosterone police and said, "And she's *wonderful*!" They all nodded their heads defiantly.

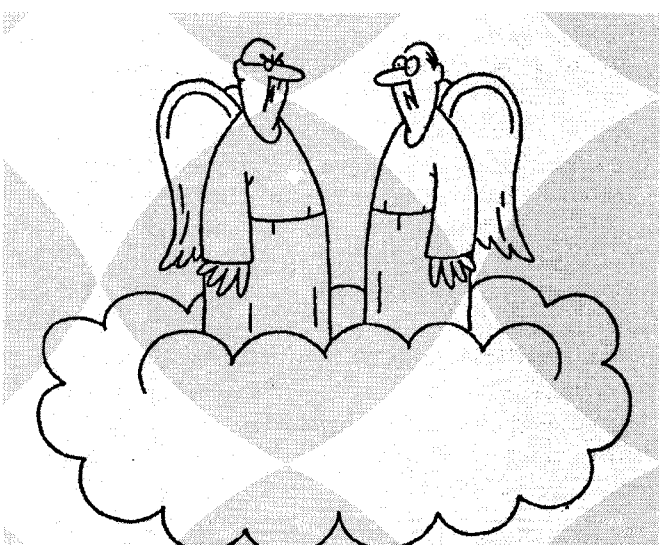
They were right. Remes's empathy, warmth, and energy lit up the church. When she came out and circulated among the congregation before the Mass, it was obvious that she knew everybody personally, and they returned her greetings with an affection and regard that were patent. A former college-level English teacher, she is a fine reader and homilist. She read the Gospel, a fairly long text, without looking at the book, and her preaching showed a nice flair for the dramatic.

The Reverend Philip Murnion of the National Pastoral Life Center in New York City speaks of the the gradual "feminization" of pastoral ministries. There are about 20,000 paid lay ministers throughout the American church, an average of one per parish, and about 80 percent of them are women. Murnion speculates that the emergence of women as pastoral leaders is related to the changing role of the church in parishioners' lives. Old-line pastors were a combination of political leader, immigrant spokesman, and master builder. But modern Catholics are more likely to use their parish for small-group faith-support activities—marriage encounter, religious education, parenting support groups, social involvement activities—of a kind that in the secular world have long been the province of professional women. When I asked parishioners at Saint Cecilia's in Houston about women priests, Joan Powers, who was that Sunday's lector and is the mother of a priest, said simply, "We already run the church."

As one would expect, Remes operates a very participatory parish. One of her objectives, which she pushes hard from the altar, is to get *every* parishioner involved in some form of volunteer activity—even the elderly and homebound are asked to commit to a certain number of hours of prayer for parish causes. "Participatory" is not quite the same as democratic. A group discussion with lay volunteers and parish staff is perfectly open and Remes is a good listener, but her personality is so strong that she dominates almost without being aware of it. Other effective pastors I met operate the same way; strong and self-confident personalities exercise natural leadership without insisting on the trappings of office.

I asked Remes about the relationship with the sacramental minister. "Bert is wonderful to work with," she said, "but the arrangement is hard on both of us. It's hard on the pastoral administrator, and it's hard on the sacramental minister." Watching Remes and Groh together, however, my impression was that the priest is in the more anomalous position. Remes is so obviously the parish leader, and Saint Mary's is so obviously her territory, that Groh is inevitably cast as a special guest star, a visiting shaman who does his routine and is gone. The Reverend Jim Picton, who is responsible for pastoral planning in Seattle, said that only mature, well-established priests adapt easily to the sacramental minister role. The other side of the coin is that pastoral administrators must grow accustomed to tiny slights (like being left off the list for pastoral meetings), although both Saginaw and Seattle work hard to prevent such snubs. Diocesan priests in good standing are also guaranteed a job and a salary; when Remes's six-year term is up, she has to find another job on her own, possibly even in another diocese.

The fact that women grace Saginaw's altars, however, is



"If I ran a business the way this place operates, I wouldn't last a month!"

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merely a surface suggestion of the profound differences between a Saginaw and a Lincoln. The soul of the church, says Vatican II, is its liturgies. The form and text of a Saginaw liturgy, of course, are exactly the same as in Lincoln; but in the subtle whispers of body language, in the intonations and attitudes that are not captured in manuals, the liturgies are quite different. The interior of Remes's cathedral, for one thing, has been redecorated in a way that quite consciously reduces its awesomeness. A photograph of the old church shows a spangled ceiling of gilt and empyrean blue, while the rest is an Italianate riot of statuary and strong colors. The new interior is spare and uncluttered, with a carpeted floor. The top half of the church is a quiet cream, while the carpet and the accent color on the walls are a Williamsburg blue. Instead of pews, there are individual cushioned chairs and kneelers, arranged in a semicircle around the altar, which has been moved out toward the center of the church, with a minimal elevation. It is very attractive, but has a secular feel, like Mt. Vernon, or the renovated Washington, D.C., train station.

Conservatives say all the right things about participatory structures, just as the pope has said all the right things about the equality and dignity of women, but the content seems to fall short of the rhetoric.

The differences were most marked in the liturgies surrounding the Eucharist. In Lincoln, the liturgical strategy is designed to *distance* the priest from the congregation, and stresses the sacral, rather than the communal, element of the consecration. Lincoln places great emphasis on the traditional Catholic ceremony of the exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Since the consecrated host is the body of Jesus Christ, the ceremony expressly calls for praying to and worshiping the consecrated host.

In Saginaw, by contrast, Remes and Groh lead the Mass in a friendly, almost conversational, tone, and the music is modern and attractive, with the Andrew Lloyd Webber/Stephen Sondheim sound that characterizes much of the newer Catholic church music. At the consecration, Groh elevates the bread and wine only about eye-high and pronounces the "This is my body...This is my blood" formula in the same conversational tone as the rest of the Mass. There is no bell, and no genuflection. Instead of using the traditional round, white, paper-tasting host, Saint Mary's uses a kind of Syrian flatbread, an unusual touch, but canonically correct; indeed, it is much like the bread Jesus probably used at the Last Supper. The eucharistic ministers break stacks of the consecrated bread into little pieces for the Communion, which are carried on plates rather than in ciboria, the more usual chalicelike containers for the Communion hosts.

The whole effect, which is quite intentional, is to *reduce* the distance between priest and people, to downplay the magical, sacral elements of the Mass, to create the feeling of a *community* celebration by a priesthood of the "People of God." The use of workaday bread emphasizes the communal "meal" aspect of the Eucharist, but also seems to exclude Blessed Sacrament services. The traditional round, white host is so unlike normal bread that Catholics have associated it only with the Eucharist. Although Saginaw teaches the same Real Presence doctrine that Lincoln does, it would still seem a little silly to worship a chunk of Syrian flatbread.

The Saginaw liturgy is quite in keeping with Vatican II's liturgical instructions on the Eucharist:

> [The Eucharist] is a...sign of unity, a bond of divine love, a special Easter meal....And so the church devotes careful efforts to prevent Christian believers from attending this mystery of faith as though they were outsiders or silent onlookers: rather...they should learn to offer themselves as they offer the immaculate victim—not just through the hands of the priest, but also they themselves making the offer together with him.

The liturgy at Saint Mary's, however, had a bit of the same feel as a Congregationalist communion service I attended a few weeks later. The minister repeated virtually the same Gospel words, and used the same chunks of bread, but, when the congregation came forward for their symbolic communal meal, it was clearly a meal of bread and wine, not of the body and blood of Christ. One of the primary worries of conservative theologians like Joseph Fessio is that thirty years of post-Vatican II progressive "communal meal" liturgies have undermined the Catholic belief in the Real Presence. Survey data suggest that they may be right. The majority of Catholic weekly church-attenders, the most faithful Catholics of all, believe that the consecrated host is only a symbolic representation of Christ, rather than Christ himself. (Avery Dulles, however, points out that the survey questions raise such a blur of complicated theological issues that the answers may be meaningless. In most Catholic parishes, including Saint Mary's, parishioners receive Communion quite reverentially.)

In the same vein, just as Lincoln underscores the hierarchical structure of the church by emphasizing titles, Saginaw demystifies by virtually eliminating them. Remes was on a first-name basis with most of her parishioners, and the prayer at Mass for the bishop is for "Bishop Ken." An important consequence of a leveling, nonauthoritarian approach to religion, however, is that priests and pastors have to *earn* their leadership. They can't fall back, as a Joseph Nemec can, on the claim that they have been appointed by Christ as their parishioners' father, like it or not (although Nemec, I think, would be effective in almost any setting). Remes can carry this off, as can many other effective Catholic pastors, but it is a Protestant approach to pastorship. Catholics don't yet elect their pastors as Protestants

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do, but the spread of Saginaw-style priest-laity relations, coupled with the recent Catholic trend toward parish-shopping, represents an important shift of power away from the institutional church.

When I mentioned to a nun in the Saginaw chancery office that Lincoln was the next stop on my itinerary, she said, "You're going to *Lincoln*!?"—and her body language suggested second thoughts about even talking to me. But when I was in Lincoln, I found myself lecturing several of the seminarians about their exaggerated impressions of Saginaw—they seem to have expected altar-top bacchanals. The Lincoln seminarians, however, had a right to feel bruised by liberals' cruel assumptions that they are "unhealthy," a code word for homosexual or sexually ambiguous. The styles of the dioceses are, in fact, quite different, but the differences tend to be caricatured—a caricature admittedly reinforced by Bishop Bruskewitz's recent threats against Catholics joining Call to Action and other "reform" groups.

How important are the differences? One test would be whether the two dioceses' religious approaches, and the much richer staffing levels in Lincoln, make a visible difference in lay practice. Surprisingly enough, it seems not. When Fessio directed me to Lincoln, he predicted I would see a church that "worked." With respect to the *internal* workings of the church, he was clearly right. The Lincoln diocese has high morale, a coherent vision of what it's about, and a remarkable corps of young priests and nuns. But Fessio also implied that Mass attendance would be much higher in Lincoln than elsewhere, and that does not appear to be the case.

The only weekly Mass attendance figures collected on a diocesan basis are the Notre Dame studies by Mark Chaves and his colleagues. (These data showed that actual weekly Mass attendance may be much lower than appears from the Gallup polls.) Chaves studied forty-eight dioceses; Lincoln, unfortunately, is not among them, but Saginaw is. Despite all its "liberalism," and Bishop Untener's distaste for threatening hellfire to enforce Mass attendance, Saginaw ranks in the top third in weekly Mass attendance, with a 31.5 percent weekly average, compared to a median of 26.7 percent. Although there are no comparable statistics for Lincoln, the envelope and collection count from Saint Teresa's allows a rough estimate. Saint Teresa's is a cohesive and family-oriented parish even by Lincoln standards, and one would expect high Mass attendance; but the collection suggests a weekly attendance of about a third, or about the same as in Saginaw.

Where Chaves's data do allow the pairing of "liberal" and "conservative" dioceses, there is no consistent relationship between theological outlook and lay church attachment. Milwaukee, for example, is arguably the most liberal urban diocese in the country, and the controversial tenure of Archbishop Rembert Weakland has long prompted strenuous complaints from conservative Catholics hoping for Vatican intervention. But Milwaukee ranks eighth out of forty-eight dioceses in Mass attendance, and along with Cincinnati, is the top-ranking big-city diocese in the sample. On the other hand, four theologically conservative dioceses—Newark, Denver, New York, and Portland, Oregon—all rank in the bottom third; but so does San Francisco, and the very liberal Seattle is close to the bottom of the list. The only semi-consistent result from Chaves's data is that rural dioceses have higher rates of Mass attendance, probably because rural parishes are smaller than average and generate a greater sense of family feeling.

The Reverend Ron Lewinski, a Chicago priest who has been studying effective parishes around the country, suggests that the lack of correlations simply demonstrates the limited influence a bishop has over the day-to-day workings of his parishes. But that would not seem to apply to Saginaw and Lincoln. Bishop Flavin in Lincoln was, and Bishop Untener in Saginaw still is, a model of the highly focused, unusually hands-on leader; over an extended period of time they both forged a pastorate very much in their own images. But it doesn't seem to make a lot of difference. Lincoln's Barnhill concedes that, although virtually all the diocesan priests have preached the sinfulness of contraception for years, Lincoln's Catholics use birth control at almost the same rate as everybody else. And despite the fact that Saginaw's Catholics are not being forced to go to the sacraments, their Mass attendance turns out to be higher than average.

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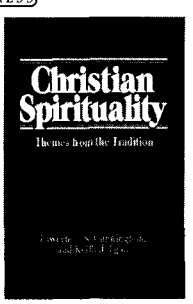

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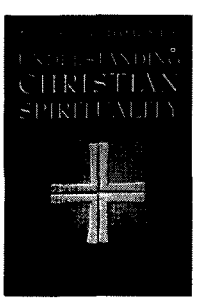

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But Saginaw has problems of its own. The participatory, nonauthoritarian model of the priesthood is a poor recruiting slogan. A much bigger diocese than Lincoln, Saginaw has many fewer priests and only five men in the pipeline. But the favored liberal recruitment solution, dropping the celibacy rule, involves much more than an incidental change in discipline. The celibate priesthood is deeply tied to a "high-tension" version of Catholicism, to something like the Lincoln model—the priest as man apart and above, the consecrated, sacred minister, the shamanistic mystic and worker of daily miracles, not the married priest who fights with his wife and has a credit-card balance at the local department store.

The risk of the "liberal" vision of the church is that Catholicism will go the way of mainstream Protestantism. Sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark have suggested that only "high-tension" religions prosper in America. Once a religion assimilates to the culture, it almost invariably diminishes into a social center or kind of low-cost group therapy. There are now fewer Episcopalians in America than there are Catholics in Los Angeles.

Perhaps the Catholic church, with its longer history and hardier theological tradition, is different—or so I have heard liberals claim. The Reverend Richard John Neuhaus, a former Protestant minister, speaks of "ecclesial fundamentalists" who think that nothing can go wrong with the church. "I came from Lutheranism," he says, "and I lived through the collapse of mainstream Protestantism. It could happen here too."

But the conservative taste for papal absolutism—the penchant for parsing every nuance of the flood of new encyclicals, and the cult of personality that seems to be forming around John Paul II—fits uncomfortably with the American tradition. Conservatives say all the right things about participatory structures, just as the pope has said all the right things about the equality and dignity of women, but the content seems to fall short of the rhetoric. The traditionalists also underestimate the importance of America in world Catholicism. None of the so-called Catholic countries of Europe and Latin America can match the activism, wealth, and dynamism of the American church, with all its recent problems. The risk of the conservative vision is that the church will dwindle to a narrow sect of true believers, too small to sustain the world symbolism of the church—the papal tours, the global missionary reach, the doctrinal councils and synods, the traditional infrastructure.

The challenge, in short, is the same one that American bishops faced in the nineteenth century—how to create a church that is both *American* and *Catholic*, drawing from the best in both traditions. The initial solution, which worked splendidly through the first half of the twentieth century, was the creation of a separate Catholic subculture with a ministate religion of its own. But when that subculture broke down, the church has been left groping for a new accommodation. The process has been painful, public, and not very pretty; and it is still far from assured of success. □

DISPUTED QUESTIONS

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT

Does it apply to family & sex?

John S. Grabowski & Michael J. Naughton question Charles E. Curran's diagnosis

In an article in *Commonweal* (October 11, 1996), Charles E. Curran asked the provocative question, "Do Catholics suffer from schizophrenia when it comes to papal moral teaching?" For Curran the answer was yes. The malady, he believes, infects both the left and the right in the church. Liberal Catholics applaud the church's social teaching but shrink from its sexual ethic. Conservative Catholics endorse the church's sexual ethic but eschew its social teaching. This schizophrenia is not merely the predicament of a politicized laity unable to distinguish between the claims of faith and the influences of culture, Curran argues. Rather it is rooted in church teaching itself and especially in the writings of Pope John Paul II.

To prove his point, Curran refers to the "significant differences" between, on the one hand, two of the pope's encyclicals, *Veritatis splendor* (1993) and *Evangelium vitae* (1995), and, on the other, his address to the United Nations (1995). The two encyclicals, Curran contends, represent a "classicist approach." These documents, Curran argues, rigidly apply absolute natural-law principles to issues of life and sexuality. In contrast, John Paul's United Nations address is less rigid and more "historically conscious." Here the pope views social change in positive terms, sees the church as basically open to the world, and understands truth as a complex phenomenon to which every human culture can contribute.

We believe Curran's dichotomy is problematic and borders on caricature. It is true, as he argues, that most of what John Paul views in *Evangelium vitae* as "moral absolutes" concern life issues such as abortion and euthanasia. But this is not the result of a "classicist approach." Rather, John Paul affirms the fundamental value of human life without which the realization of the social goods he discusses in his United Nations address is impossible. Curran charges John Paul with failing to take the more open and historically conscious approach of Vatican II's *Gaudium et spes*. But *Gaudium et spes*, like *Evangelium vitae*, never flinches on the absolute importance of protecting life. The bishops write that, "Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, geno-

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cide, abortion, euthanasia...poisons human society" (*GS*, 27). Hence not just *Evangelium vitae*, but *Gaudium et spes* takes the "either/or" approach Curran critiques. Any other approach would undermine the church's prophetic responsibility, as set forth in Deuteronomy: "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life that you and your descendants may live" (Deut. 30:19). To speak against the culture of death in absolute terms is not to advocate a rigid and closed system of morality, as Curran argues, but to protect human life—the basis of all culture.

Curran's greatest disagreement with John Paul is over sexual issues, such as artificial contraception, homosexuality, and nonmarital sexual relationships. On these issues, Curran accuses John Paul of failing to take seriously the particularities of individual circumstances, as the pope does with social issues. But unlike social issues, embedded in constantly changing governments and institutional bodies, sexual issues within the church refer to the context of the family. The family plays a fundamental role in the procreation and protection of human life through the conjugal union of man and woman in marriage. Because of this role, the family has a more foundational and permanent character than other social institutions.

The family, in fact, is the basis of other institutions and human society as a whole. In *Gaudium et spes*, the first modern issue the council fathers examine is marriage and the family. The document then moves out into cultural, economic, political, and international communities. It does this because it sees all communities, even the United Nations itself, as rooted in the unity of the family. The family is the basic cell of every human society; hence society is dependent upon the family. To claim that the family is a more immutable structure than other institutions is not to oppose a "historically conscious" approach, as Curran maintains, but to recognize the family's fundamental role in social stability and its rootedness in the permanent union of a man and a woman in the covenant of marriage.

There is, therefore, some truth in Curran's claim that the church's social teaching is more open-ended and dynamic in the face of historical change. Since the church's social teaching focuses on economic and political institutions, it must respond to the contingencies of historical circumstances in order to foster human development. The church's social teaching does not specify particular socioeconomic and political structures, but rather condemns or condones them on the basis of whether they respect the dignity of the human person in light of both revelation and natural law. The understanding of the family in church teaching has developed (extended to nuclear), but these developments have been minor in nature in comparison to shifts in socioeconomic structures (agricultural to industrial to informational). Curran is correct that the church's social teaching is more historically conscious than its sexual ethic, but to have it any other way the church would either have to relativize the family or baptize a particular social arrangement—for example, capitalism or socialism.

Curran's analysis raises the much larger issue of the development of moral doctrine in the church. This issue is too vast to examine adequately here, yet it should not surprise us, as it does Curran, that the church's social teaching has developed more quickly than its teaching on human life and sexuality. This is not because the church is more "with it" on the social issues, but rather because of the contingent nature of the latter. Curran argues that, because the church has changed its mind on democracy, religious liberty, and human rights (adopting Enlightenment insights), it should be able to change its position on sexual issues such as contraception and homosexuality. But to say such a thing is to fail to recognize the more basic nature of sexual values and the institutions embodying them.

We want to be careful not to give the impression that the issues of life, sexuality, and social living can be neatly separated into distinct categories. To the contrary, there is an organic unity to the moral life; in the words of the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, it is a "seamless garment." The respect for life enshrined in the commandment not to kill is the very basis of every just human society. Indeed this commandment underlies the social teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures enjoining care for strangers, widows, orphans, and the poor. When this respect for life in all its forms is not present, society itself degenerates into manifestations of the "culture of death."

We do not see a clash in John Paul's teaching between a rigid classicist approach to sexual ethics and an open, historically conscious approach to social ethics. What we do see is an effort to formulate an integrated account of morality that reflects the understanding of the human person as created in God's image. It must be admitted, however, that there is something in Curran's diagnosis of schizophrenia that rings true. Still, the root of the problem is not a clash between classicist and historically conscious ways of thinking. Rather, it is the endurance of the legalistic morality that dominated Catholic thought in the last four centuries. Because the

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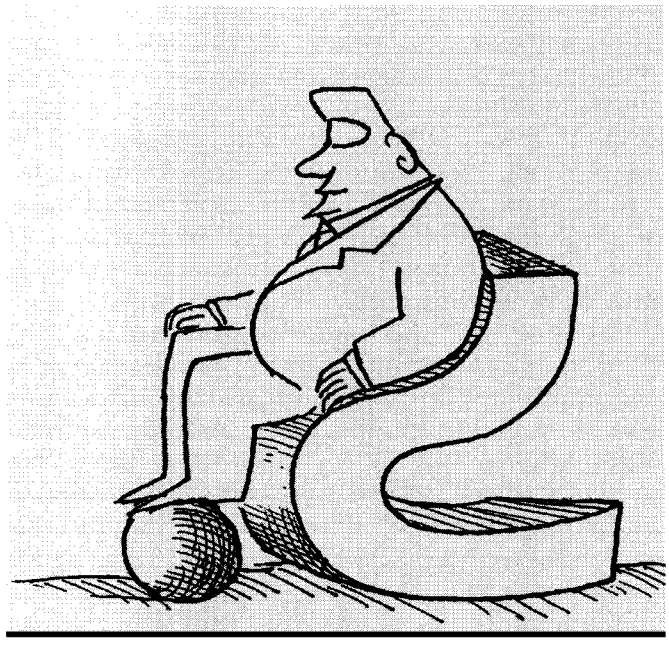
Catholic manualists held that, strictly speaking, one is only required to avoid evil rather than to do good, many of the positive injunctions of the social tradition were marginalized. So in many cases, Catholic social teaching seems to lack "teeth" in church law and in the practice of Catholic organizations. The solution to this legalism is not, however, to equivocate in regard to values of life or sexuality, but to reject the mindset that makes social goods dispensable. As a church, we must discover ways to describe the binding character of the good without reducing the whole of morality to law.

Undoubtedly there is room for deeper understanding and better formulations in all of the strands of Catholic moral teaching. Because the moral life is rooted in the spiritual life, it is always open to growth. But Curran's diagnosis of schizophrenia fails to appreciate the organic unity and integrity of the church's moral tradition. It also fails to identify the legalism that is the real cause of the schizophrenia hamstringing the application of Catholic social teaching. □

John S. Grabowski *is associate professor of moral theology at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.* **Michael J. Naughton** *is assistant professor of social ethics and management at the University of Saint Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota.*



CHARLES E. CURRAN REPLIES

Do I detect a little schizophrenia in the Grabowski-Naughton reply to my article? "Curran's dichotomy is problematic and borders on caricature." Yet they acknowledge: "Curran is correct that the church's social teaching is more historically conscious than its sexual ethic...."

Grabowski-Naughton and I agree there are differences in methodology between the papal social and papal sexual teachings. They are absolutely correct in asserting that my "greatest disagreement with John Paul is over sexual issues" and the dialogue between us "raises the much larger issue of the development of moral doctrine."

My respondents agree with the papal teaching on sexual matters and logically argue that change or development on sexual issues has not been as significant as it has been on social issues. They contend that sexual issues are embodied in the context of marriage and family, which have a more permanent and fundamental character than political and economic social institutions. Here lies the ultimate difference between us.

There have been significant developments and changes in our teaching on marriage, family, and human sexuality. For the greater part of the church's history, marriage was not acknowledged as one of the seven sacraments. The requirement of marriage before a priest as the witness of the church came only with the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century. The church has made exceptions in the indissolubility of the marriage contract where both partners were not baptized. The practice of granting annulments has changed dramatically in the last fifty years. I strongly criticize some Catholic teaching on the family that still maintains the 1930s' papal teaching that the husband is the head and the wife is the heart of the family. Sociologists remind us of the tremendous developments that have occurred with regard to our understanding of the family. The fact that life expectancy has doubled in this century has greatly influenced the relationship between husband and wife.

Changes in the moral understanding of human sexuality have been even more dramatic. In the early church, the intention of procreation was necessary to prevent marital intercourse from being sinful. Later on, the church recognized that spouses did not have to intend procreation in their marital sexuality; love union was accepted as an end of marriage and sexuality. With the official acceptance of rhythm by Pope Pius XII, spouses could even intend to avoid procreation in their sexual acts! Without doubt, the church's teaching on sexuality has developed and changed a great deal over time. I argue for the need for further change in our understanding of human sexuality.

I do not see the positions I propose in both social and sexual ethics as justified by being "more 'with it.'" At times, Catholic teaching learns from the broader society and at other times must criticize it. In both social and sexual ethics, we must continue to criticize the one-sided individualism that too often characterizes American life and thought today. □

The Reverend Charles E. Curran *is Elizabeth Scurlock University Professor of Human Values at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.*

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Frank McConnell

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS ON PBS

Lipscomb's 'Battle for the Minds'

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, founded 1859, is one of the jewels in the crown of Louisville, Kentucky, my home town. Even when I was growing up Catholic in the fifties, I was aware—it must have been through osmosis—that Southern was the cynosure of the Baptist seminaries, their Harvard, their *collegium sacrum*, their West Point or Sandhurst. Hey—my first date, age twelve, was with the daughter of a guy who taught there; maybe I'll tell you someday about the turmoil that (alas, disastrous) date caused in my large, fiercely papist, Baptiphobic family.

But now, I just want to explain to you why Steven Lipscomb's brilliant documentary, "Battle for the Minds," which chronicles the recent takeover of Southern by intransigent and unforgiving fundamentalists, is so personally poignant. It airs on PBS on June 10 (check local listings), another splendid addition to the *P.O.V.* series of documentaries which for a decade now has graced public television with so much intelligence. It's the story of the death—or at least the serious wounding—of a grand institution. It's the tale of a takeover and a subsequent purge. It's a parable about the relationship of doctrinal authority and individual conscience.

It's about women.

Lipscomb decided to make this film because his mother was trying to get ordained in the Southern Baptist Convention. And she couldn't. In his attempt to find out why, he discovered a secret history that is the real story of his film, and that applies, scarily, to belief-systems far removed from the Southern Baptists.

Well, not all that secret, really. Southern Baptism is still the largest Protestant denomination in the country, and politically the most hefty: Clinton, Gore, Gingrich, Thurmond, and Jesse Helms are all in its communion. Its doctrines are, to a large extent, antidoctrinal. As Harold Bloom observes in *The American Religion*, and as a number of interviewees in the film say, in its origins the denomination was ferociously dedicated to the authority of the individual conscience, the individual's own "walk with Jesus."

But—as the earlier PBS history of fundamentalism, "With God on Our Side," makes clear—around the mid-seventies of this century, the churches began to realize how much heft they *did* wield; and the fundamentalists, perhaps because of the soundless depth of their conviction, realized it most acutely. At any rate, as "Battle for the Minds" documents, by the Southern Baptist Convention of 1979, the fundamentalists had positioned themselves to take control of the major offices of the denomination—led, in large part, by Paige Patterson, who is now president of Southeastern Seminary. And on their agenda, besides the inerrancy of Scripture, was the impossibility of ordaining women.

By 1984, at the convention in Kansas City, they were strong enough to pass

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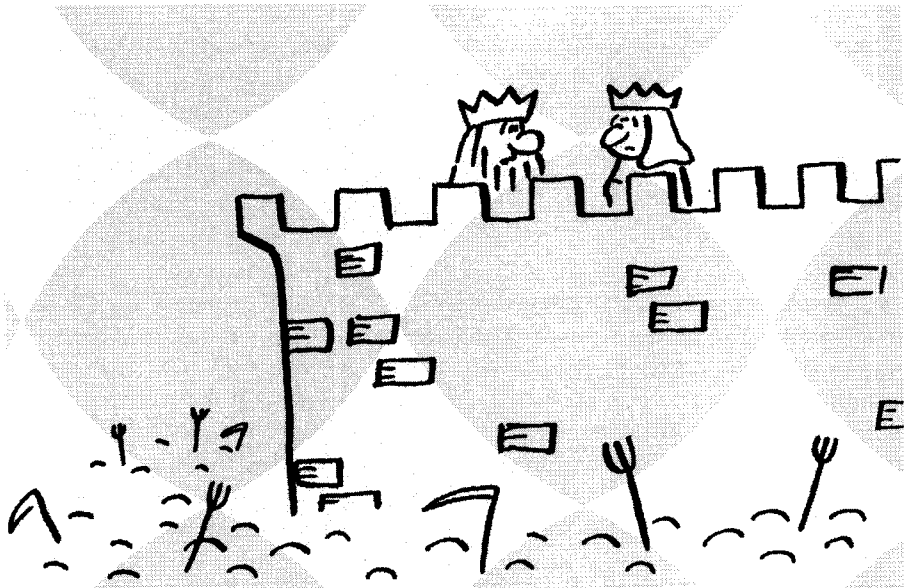

"It's times like these that I wish I'd stuck with middle-management."

a resolution to the effect that no woman could *ever* serve as a deacon in a Southern Baptist church. Objections from the convention floor were ignored or ruled out of order; and sometimes, as the film shows, floor mikes were simply turned off. It was, as many respondents in Lipscomb's movie say, a remarkable invasion of magisterial authority into a denomination that, tracing its beginnings to the noble Roger Williams, had set itself squarely *against* magisterium. By 1995, at the convention in Atlanta, a resolution was passed that not only women could not serve as pastors, but that *teaching* the pastorate of women was *verboten*, and grounds for dismissal.

Things, in other words, had gotten pretty Orwellian for Louisville.

Now 1995 is the key year for "Battle for the Minds," because, at least according to Lipscomb's version of history, that was the year that Southern Baptism came apart.

By '95, Southern, the citadel of liberal Baptism, had fallen. Its president was Albert Mohler, Jr., formerly a liberal but now a deep-dyed conservative. (You're right: "Battle for the Minds" is happily and unabashedly *parti pris*, and Brother Mohler is its Designated Bad Guy. Come on, you're going to talk about religion and *not* take sides?) And the most popular and beloved professor of theology at Southern was a liberal and feminist named Molly Marshall.

So you can write the rest of the plot. Rumors and letters were circulated to the students that Molly Marshall was outside the Baptist convenant, even outside Christian belief altogether, and in 1995, according to her, Mohler told her that she could either resign or be fired. She resigned, and the student protest rocked the seminary, drove away other talented faculty and students, and—at least if this documentary is to be trusted—compromised the school's preeminence perhaps permanently.

It's a bitter little tale Lipscomb tells, with political ambition, professional careerism, religious absolutism, and personal moral conviction all mixed together in an especially distasteful stew. And he tells it well. From the beginning, he intercuts color footage of the student protests over Molly Marshall, meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention, and press conferences by the seminary administrators, with black-and-white, head-shot commentary by the major players—including a lot of Marshall. And he has the great good sense to use, as his opening and closing theme, the rock group REM's wonderful song, "Losing My Religion": Now *that's* a smart guy!

Besides the brilliance and inherent interest of the film, though, I wonder if it isn't an especially arresting one for Catholics—at least for Catholics troubled by recent pronouncements about the role of women in the church, and especially Catholics concerned with the whiff of sexism in traditional Christian belief as it has come down to us.

Southern Baptism, anti-authoritarian and deeply private, is almost a funhouse mirror image of Catholic belief. And yet its recent history, at least according to this film, seems to have brought it to the same crisis currently possessing the older church. Is a patriarchal system the only way of church governance? And if so, why? Can a brilliant woman not serve as pastor instead of a dull male? And if not, why not?

Al Mohler is still president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Molly Marshall, as of the time of the film, is still looking for a job.

Anybody interested in the future of American religion should watch this film: It's a cautionary tale. □

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Why Scripture isn't enough

The Moral Vision of the New Testament
Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics
Richard B. Hays
HarperSanFrancisco, $25, 508 pp.

Luke Timothy Johnson

The question whether the New Testament can provide adequate moral guidance for Christian behavior is an open one. Is there consistency to be found within the obvious diversity of its texts? Is the guidance of the New Testament both necessary and sufficient for authentic Christian behavior? To state these questions another way: Is the normative character of the New Testament absolute or relative? It is within the framework of this fundamental set of difficult and interrelated problems that Richard Hays's major new study should be evaluated.

Hays seeks not simply to describe the moral teaching of the New Testament (difficult enough), but above all to show how Christian moral life might be rooted in and guided by the New Testament. How do we get from these ancient texts to present-day behavior? Hays is not naïve about the resistance posed by the New Testament itself, but asserts that the New Testament *is* an adequate source of a coherent Christian ethics. Indeed, he insists that "extra-biblical sources stand in a hermeneutical relation to the New Testament; they are not independent counterbalancing sources of authority." In effect, he argues for a form of ethical *sola scriptura*, which means he must find some implicit unity underlying the explicit diversity of the literary compositions.

Hays offers as such a synthesis the images of "Community, Cross, and New Creation," which he regards as shorthand for the "single fundamental story" that unifies the New Testament compositions. His project unfolds in four stages: the descriptive (in which he engages the canonical writings as such); the synthetic (in which he argues for the use of his three focal images); the hermeneutical (in which he considers the way several ethicists use Scripture); and the pragmatic (in which he takes up a series of specific moral questions: war and peace, anti-Semitism, marriage and divorce, abortion, and homosexuality). Violence is his moral test-case. Much of his passion is given to his argument for a strict pacifism.

Some notable virtues of the book should be applauded. No comparable study by a New Testament scholar takes on the whole task from the descriptive to the normative. And Hays is an uncommonly skilled reader of texts. He also gets down to hard cases and pushes for decision. Agree with his conclusions or not, his courage in reaching them is admirable. Hays's exceptionally clear style of writing, his choice of practical issues, and his selection of theoretical conversation-partners show that he is eager to contribute to the conversation within the Christian community concerning the use of the New Testament.

Because this book fills a need and will surely be regarded as a major contribution, critical questions are all the more necessary. My first set of questions concerns consistency, and what is normative about the New Testament.

Hays is inconsistent concerning one of the most fundamental questions of all, namely the textual basis for deriving moral teaching from the New Testament. He is explicitly committed to a strong view of canon. All the texts are to be considered precisely as literary compositions. In practice, however, he slips into an "authorial" approach. Paul's letters are not considered individually, but as expressions of "Paul's voice." Not only is "Paul's voice" already an abstraction drawn from the complex texture of the many Pauline letters, and thus a preliminary and unacknowledged "synthetic moment," but it leaves consideration of the disputed "Pauline" letters in limbo. Hays is equally inconsistent concerning the status of the New Testament compositions *vis-à-vis* history. At the heart of the distinction between authentic and inauthentic Pauline letters are decisions concerning historical development in early Christianity, decisions that have notoriously involved theological corollaries, which Hays unfortunately perpetuates. For example, is it the case that "the authentic Paul" simply has better stuff to say, or is he presumed to have better stuff to say because he is the earliest and fullest witness, and development must therefore indicate decline? Are compositions authoritative because they are written by a specific author, or because they are considered witnesses to "the original Christianity"? Or are they authoritative because the church has made them canonical?

A deeper indication of Hays's confusion on this point is evident in his decision to take up the question of the historical Jesus. Despite his reasonable observations in this section, an attempt to deal with the historical Jesus in any fashion stands in obvious tension to his principle of treating the compositions of the New Testament as the basis for ethical inquiry. And when Hays says, "If the New Testament writers based their

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moral visions on a distorted or fundamentally mistaken view of what Jesus of Nazareth actually did and taught, then the church's subsequent reliance on these texts would be misplaced," he is making, in my view, an unfortunately wrong turn. Not only does he inadvertently play directly into the hands of those who wish to hold the Christian tradition hostage to the ever-shifting conclusions of historical inquiry, but he diminishes the critical role played by convictions concerning precisely what Jesus did *not* do and say, namely his death and resurrection, for shaping the "image of Jesus" that stands at the heart of Hays's "single fundamental story."

Secondly, Hays's selection of conversation-partners also raises questions. Although his choice of ethicists is not intended to "represent a comprehensive typology of hermeneutical strategies," his exclusion of Paul Ramsey is a real weakness. Ramsey's importance for the shaping of the discipline of ethics in this country is obvious, not least because of his vigorous attempt to ground Christian ethics in Scripture. Since Ramsey's approach to Scripture, as to ethics, was through the establishment of moral principles, he would have provided a distinctive hermeneutical option. Furthermore, Ramsey devoted a major part of his attention to the question of war and peace, and represents a thoughtful version of the just-war tradition that Hays dismisses much too easily. If Hays seriously wanted to make war and violence the central moral test-case for his approach, he would have benefited by taking on Ramsey rather than appearing to rig the game by including both the pacifists John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas.

Similarly, readers who follow Hays's argumentation closely in his consideration of specific moral questions will find that the weight given to the various hermeneutical principles applied to the witness of the New Testament sometimes shifts dramatically but without much explanation. In the case of war and violence, Hays sticks close to the most literal reading of the New Testament and resists any effort to soften its testimony. In the case of anti-Judaism, by contrast,

"'Situation ethics,' you say?"

Hays works mightily to overcome the obvious and overwhelming weight of the New Testament's witness concerning the Jews. He finds the New Testament's language about the Jews historically understandable but morally repugnant. On what grounds? He surprisingly finds little help in *reason*, although he grants that the Enlightenment ideas of tolerance can coexist with the New Testament. Other than that, he seems to think that in this instance moral reasoning plays little role. In the case of anti-Semitism, Hays overturns the normativity of the New Testament on the basis of experience: "The role of *experience*...is crucial in causing the church after the Holocaust to reassess its theology and its use of Scripture." What Hays means by "experience" is the violence and hatred shown by Christians, and the suffering, degradation, and genocide suffered by Jews. On the basis of this overwhelming experience, he is willing to nullify the virtually unanimous testimony of the New Testament concerning the antagonism between Christianity and Judaism.

The status granted "experience" in the case of anti-Semitism makes Hays's treatment of homosexuality all the more striking. In this case, as he well shows, the witness of the New Testament is also unanimous. But does "experience" have any weight in this issue? It is fascinating that, although Hays is willing to allow some positive evidence in, he resists its implications. And in this case "experience" does *not* include, as it had in the case of the Jews, the centuries of hostility and suffering engendered by the unthinking application of the New Testament texts to living human beings. Were not homosexuals also shipped to death camps, and did not the Christian tradition of relegating homosexuals to the realm of the "deviant" have the same effect of fomenting violence against them as it did against Jews?

The problem is not simply that Hays's criteria are unevenly applied; the real problem is with the premise that the New Testament is itself an adequate source for Christian moral discourse. My next set of questions, therefore, concerns Hays's overall construal of his project. His *sola scriptura* approach needs to be supplemented by a deeper appreciation of the norms of tradition, reason, and experience, which he has otherwise tended to downplay, and also needs to be placed within a more comprehensive understanding of Christian moral life.

A more adequate model for moral discernment within Christianity requires a sharper definition of the church as the *reading community*. Is the church constituted only on the basis of reading the New Testament? Or is it a community structured also by rules and procedures and liturgies that are not derived simply from Scripture? The contributions of Hays's Duke colleague, Stanley Hauerwas, could have been exploited more fully on this point, for Hauerwas recognizes that intentional communities are not only readers, but also practitioners, whose prior rules for behavior already deeply affect their reading of texts. Tradition, reason, and experience, in turn, can be seen as modalities of this rich life within communities, not as diminishments but as enhancements of Scripture's authority. Reason, for example, should not necessarily be identified with an Enlightenment discourse, as Hays tends to do. The "Natural Law" understanding of prudential reasoning, for example, is essentially compatible with the Pauline understanding of the "mind of Christ."

Within a more positive appreciation of the church, a more flexible, *midrashic* mode of reading Scripture can be em-

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ployed, for not everything must be made to rest on Scripture alone. The New Testament compositions can be read in all their diversity and complexity. The danger of any synthesis is that it tends to close off the possibility of texts being heard in new and challenging ways; either the texts are ignored because they do not fit within the synthesis, or they are read as though already comprehended because they are read in light of synthesis.

Similarly, Hays has a very high view of the New Testament's authority, but he fails to define the basis of that authority. Is it the inspiration of the texts, or their canonicity? Does their authority reside in the texts as literary compositions, or as the expression of authorial voices? Further attention needs to be paid to the *way* in which texts function authoritatively for the church's moral discernment. It is more helpful, for example, to distinguish understandings of authority on the basis of *function* than on the basis of historical precedence or theological consistency. Thus, the New Testament texts can be seen as "authoring" a certain identity, as "authorizing" modes of interpretation and reasoning, and as providing "authorities" that must be taken into account.

In short, any discussion of Christian morality must be placed within a coherent theological framework. Hays does not make clear, for example, whether revelation ceased with Jesus and is comprehensively contained in the New Testament, or whether the revelation of the living God continues in the world. This determination makes all the difference in the way one assesses "tradition" and, above all, "experience." An appeal to experience from the latter perspective is not a humanistic reduction, but a call to discern God's own work in the world, manifested in human lives. Furthermore, for all of his invocation of the "fundamental story" of Scripture, Hays does not articulate the ways in which the "theological drama" of idolatry, sin, grace, faith, reconciliation, and forgiveness intersect with the "moral drama." Perhaps he assumes these connections, but it would be helpful to see more clearly how "New Testament Ethics" has anything to do with what the Catholic tradition terms "moral theology."

Finally, Hays leaves almost completely untouched the relationship of ethics to a more comprehensive understanding of *moral formation* within the believing community. His approach remains act-centered. One looks for more of an understanding of ethics as the *ethos* of a people, or, for the individual, transformation according to the "mind of Christ." Much of the New Testament moral exhortation, in fact, operates at this level rather than at the level of "moral issues." Hays states that "only the Catholic Epistles take the form of general moral wisdom for the church at large." This statement could be challenged for accuracy. The more important point is that Hays himself remains unconcerned with the shaping of that "general moral wisdom." His book would have looked much different, and would probably have been improved, if in the second part he had turned not to a consideration of moral problems but to the possibilities for shaping such a Christian ethos on the basis of his focal images: How would they work when addressing issues such as the relationship between faith and virtue, edification and holiness?

Until Christian communities have a stronger Christian *character*, and are committed to moral transformation, indeed to sanctification, they are in a poor position (as Hays repeatedly notes) to handle such boundary issues as eugenics and euthanasia. Is not the first task of Christian ethics, in the present age, to rediscover ways of cultivating communities whose character is shaped by "the mind of Christ"? Is this not also the task the New Testament has the most obvious authority to perform and—on the evidence of the saints—does best? Professor Hays's new book, which takes significant steps in this direction, may encourage further and still more fundamental progress toward that goal. □

Luke Timothy Johnson *teaches New Testament at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. He is the author of* The Real Jesus *(HarperSanFrancisco).*

HEAVEN FORBID

The Discovery of Heaven
Harry Mulisch
Viking, $34.95, 715 pp.

Molly Finn

The overarching plot of this big, sprawling novel by the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch (*The Assault*) is revealed to the reader in a prologue and, scattered at intervals throughout the book, five dialogues between two wisecracking angels. The junior angel is reporting to a superior (you know he's superior because he talks—sometimes at length—in italics; very annoying) who in turn will keep "the Chief" posted. Given the characters, it seems fair to assume that these dialogues take place in heaven, a big bureaucracy in the sky, with "departments," a hierarchy of angels who advise each other to "delegate more," and a Chief who acts out of his "unfathomable wisdom, which may sometimes surprise even himself." As the dialogue creaks along like a mechanical model in a Grade B dinosaur movie, the reader is introduced to the assignment these angels are carrying out.

God has concluded that, by unraveling the genetic code, humans have discovered the secret of creation, thereby betraying his covenant with them. To end the covenant officially, the original tablets of the Ten Commandments must be found and returned to heaven. The angels' task is to create a person equipped to carry out this extraordinary mission and to make sure that the circumstances of his life allow him to succeed.

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Quinten, the angel/child to whom the mission is entrusted, is the offspring of some remarkable characters whose backgrounds, gifts, adventures, and, above all, conversations about friendship, loyalty, love and desire, history, art, science, technology, religion, fate, and good and evil form the substance of the 700 pages of the novel that take place on earth. Since Quinten isn't born until page 344, we have plenty of time to get to know his two possible fathers, the only real characters in the book. They are partners in a friendship that encompasses all the excitement of discovery, true intellectual companionship with just enough competitiveness to give it a little edge, easy intimacy, humor, and fun, all so beautifully and vividly portrayed the reader is envious. Onno Quist, son of one of Holland's leading establishment families, is a big sloppy lawyer-turned-philologist whose linguistic gifts won him early recognition and who is devoting his life to deciphering the so-called Phaistos disc, one of the few remaining unsolved hieroglyphic fragments. Max Delius is an astronomer and an enthusiastic womanizer whose father, a collaborator with the Germans during World War II, sent his Jewish mother off to a concentration camp. Onno and Max have each heard of the other's father; they compare notes until they conclude that they were both conceived on the same day in 1933.

For the first few months of their friendship they are so completely satisfied with each other's company and conversation that their work, their other friends, and their lovers fall into the background. But when Max becomes involved with Ada, a beautiful cellist, the balance changes and for a time they become a threesome. The balance changes again, Ada moves in with Onno, and, when she discovers she is pregnant, they marry. Onno remains unaware that Max might be the father of her child. And as the result of a car accident when she is six months pregnant, Ada lapses into an irreversible coma.

As the angels have told us, these characters and events are but preparations for the advent of Quinten, who turns out to be principally a vehicle for the action, and more a concept than a character. He is an uncommonly beautiful, self-possessed, and oddly detached child who is brought up by Ada's mother and Max in a castle that has been converted into apartments occupied by a very heterogeneous group of people. Although he goes to the local school, Quinten is actually educated by his neighbors who impart knowledge and skills as widely diverse as art history and picking locks that will enable him eventually to carry out his mission. One of them has an extensive collection of architectural picture books that fascinate Quinten, who, at age ten, has had a "nurturing architectural dream...the universe transformed into a single architectural complex, without beginning or end. Nowhere is there a living thing to be seen....[and a] fortified door with the padlock on it at 'the center of the world.'" For the next six years and without knowing why, Quinten studies the books in an effort to find his building, which he has named "The Citadel." He finds shadows, similarities, clues in buildings of antiquity and the Renaissance and in drawings of the architectural fantasies of Piranesi, but never his building, clearly an image of heaven.

Just before his seventeenth birthday, Quinten sets forth on a quest for the tablets that leads him away from Holland and gives the author a chance to treat readers to the second great reward of this novel: his enchanting, exciting, and exquisitely accurate descriptions of Venice, Rome, and Jerusalem. With the help of Onno's expertise in ancient languages and archaeology, and in a suspenseful and exciting denouement, Quinten's mission is accomplished.

Mulisch has undertaken to portray in this novel a sweeping, panoramic view of this world, ancient and modern, scientific and artistic, with consideration of many of the big philosophical issues of our time and an examination of human capacities for good and evil ranging through friendship, love, and the horrors of the Holocaust. He has also chosen to present several images of heaven. In addition to those described above, we see a heaven that is a wasteland of abstraction, where "figures take shape and disappear, triangles, circles, ellipses, hyperbolas, spheres, cones, cubes, octahedrons, dodecahedrons, where tumbling spheroids glow and merge in the endless harmony of the Endless Light." No angels listen to Mozart in this heaven, nor God to Bach. There is no redeemer here. In the end, the question remains: Why would anyone familiar with Mulisch's rich, complex, juicy, variegated, pulsing earth have the slightest interest in his bleak and bureaucratic heaven? □

"This eternity—when is it all going to end?"

Molly Finn *is a free-lance writer. She lives in New York City.*

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RELIGION BOOKNOTES

Lawrence S. Cunningham

Thompson, swimming against theological eddies, wishes to do Christology in a "non-surgical" manner, which is to say to respect the integrity of the body of Scripture. In his words: "Our approach is noninvasive in the sense that it wants to do Christology from within the movements of the Gospel texts (and of Scripture as a whole)." This noninvasive approach leads him to consider such distinctions as "high and low" Christology in a new light: no longer as an either/or, but as the creative interplay of faith and history, divinity and humanity, all belonging to the Word of God.

This approach also binds his scholarship as closely to the body of believers as to the world of *Wissenschaft*. For it is none other than the ancient and honorable practice of theology once succinctly described by Saint Anselm: "faith seeking understanding [*fides quaerens intellectum*]." Anyone who thinks such a procedure is retrograde would do well to read Thompson's rich book.

The Struggle for Theology's Soul: Contesting Scripture in Christology
by William M. Thompson
Crossroad/Herder, $39.95, 310 pp.

Take his chapter on the psalms. No supersessionist, his reading of the psalter is not a naïve search for Christological symbols in anticipation of New Testament "fulfillment," but he nonetheless sees an implicit Christology. Thompson sees the psalms as meditations on the force of revelation and reads the New Testament as providing doctrinal flesh. Psalter and New Testament, as it were, sing to each other antiphonally (an idea which is at least as old as Augustine).

Working from within the tradition, Thompson brings new insights to old materials. Thus his reflections on Wisdom motifs (and especially in Proverbs 8); so also his commentary on the infancy of Jesus in which, true to his earlier research, he draws on the French school of spirituality and links infancy with the playfulness of Proverbs. Thompson argues that a Christology attuned to infancy not only leads us to reconsider both the status of victims (children exhibit helplessness) and the role of women in the redemptive drama, but reminds us also of the cosmic play of Wisdom. Wisdom further keeps revelation open and, in that way, is an entry point for interreligious dialogue (as Thomas Merton underscored).

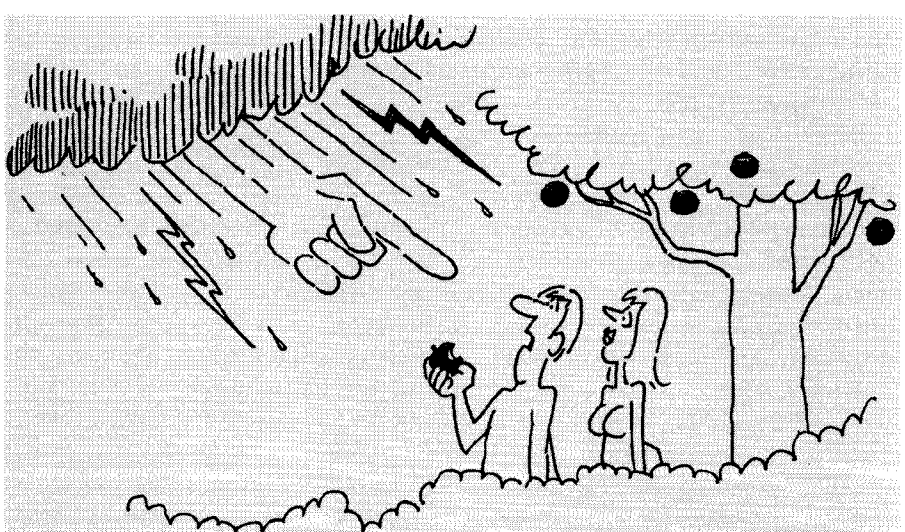
Thompson's work has affinities with the theological methodology of Hans Urs von Balthasar (and perhaps Barth), by which I mean that it starts from and stands within the community of belief. It may not be everyone's style of theology, but I learned much from this book and was profoundly moved by it. And I recommend it to be read in the manner in which it was written: through the lens of a deep and contemplative faith.

I try to alert readers of these notes when new anthologies of historical sources pertinent for Christian spirituality come onto the market. The late Joan Petersen's anthology contains introductions to and translations of classic sources relating to the lives and works of ascetic women in the early period of the church's life. She provides us with Gregory of Nyssa's life of his sister, Macrina; a generous selection of Saint Jerome's writings on the ascetic women of his era in Rome, Egypt, and Palestine; Palladius's lives of Melania the Elder and Melania the Younger; Gerontius's *Life of the Holy Macrina*; and, finally, early medieval Gallic documents relating to the life of the royal Radegunde, written by such luminaries as Gregory of Tours and Venantius Fortunatus (the fine hymnist).

Handmaids of the Lord: Holy Women in Late Antiquity & the Early Middle Ages
edited/translated by Joan M. Petersen
Cistercian Publications, $24.95 (paperback), 441 pp.

Both the introductions and the translations are amply endnoted. The book closes with a bibliography of general sources and particular bibliographies for each of the persons represented but, alas, no index.

A close reading of these *vitae* teaches us a good deal about asceticism in the early church (although the book never even refers to the quite different practice in the Syriac world of the time) and no little, parenthetically, about the early liturgy, pilgrimages, scriptural interpretation and study, and the social life among, mainly, the late antique aristocratic classes. It was also a personal if



"We couldn't help it—we didn't have any role models!*"*

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somewhat perverse pleasure to reread the dyspeptic Jerome.

Joan Petersen's work deserves an honored place on the bookshelf along with similar books which I have noted in this column, especially JoAnn MacNamara's *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (1992) and Thomas Noble's *Soldiers of Christ* (1995). All of these collections of translated materials help in furthering that *ressourcement* which is at the heart of the study of the Christian spiritual tradition.

Ahlgren's book is less a study of Teresa of Avila's teaching than a close examination of how Teresa managed to become who she was—an extraordinary *maestra espiritual* (and, subsequently, a doctor of the church) at a time when the church was in full reaction against nonhierarchical (and sometimes heretical) movements in general. It was a period in particular when women who claimed visionary experience wrote and spent time at large (outside the cloister). Ahlgren is further interested in understanding how and why Teresa became the only Spanish woman canonized by the church in the post-Tridentine epoch.

Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity
by Gillian T. W. Ahlgren
Cornell University Press, $29.95, 185 pp.

In the telling, Teresa appears only so far as she struggles with the charge that she belonged to the mystical *Alumbrados*, whom the Spanish Inquisition so feared, and answers critics who railed that the writing of books by women was *praeter naturam* [beyond their nature].

But Teresa did write, because she wanted to provide her sisters with texts about their own spiritual journey, and she did live a good deal outside of the cloister, because she saw a need to reform Carmelite houses. Her strategy was to submit to her confessors; to protest her orthodoxy; to confess her weakness as a woman; and, most importantly, to write subtly, lest her detractors attack her as an exponent of the feared heretics then known collectively as *los luteranos*.

Ahlgren's work sets out all of this in great detail (she has done a lot of archival work in Spain) and, to that extent, is really informative. I do think, however, that the feminist lens through which she sees Teresa is a bit narrow. After all, John of the Cross and Ignatius of Loyola also felt the hot breath of the Inquisition. Teresa was canonized a scant 40 years after her death, while John's canonization was postponed 138 years. Furthermore, Ahlgren's claim, in her final chapter, that the canonization of Teresa reshaped her *vita* to conform to the standards of the militant Catholicism of the day could be applied to every saint ever canonized by papal decree. Taking a clue from Amitai Etzioni, I argued nearly twenty years ago in *The Meaning of Saints* that all lives of the saints are "constructed." Finally, looking at Bayside, New York, or Conyers, Georgia, or Medjurgorje (to name just a few) makes one sympathetic to the "institutional" church when it takes a *hard* look at visionary claims.

In sum, this book usefully contextualizes the lives of one of the most fascinating women in the history of the church, though the person more or less disappears in the mix. Still, I'm glad to have read it because it does make the reading of Teresa's own work more lively.

Miriam Pollard's book is a work of startling singularity. A contemplative nun for many years, she meditates on the twenty-year prison life of Hitler's architecture and armaments minister, Albert Speer, as he described those years in his diaries published (in English) in 1976. Speer always denied that he knew of the Holocaust but nonetheless emphatically asserted his moral complicity in the whole Nazi enterprise, because, at least by 1943-44, he could have known but kept himself in the dark. This form of ignorance is what the old moral theologians called supine or crass ignorance, and it is what fascinates Pollard. Of it she writes: "Complicity in evil because one has willfully destroyed one's capacity to recognize it...seems as wrong to me as complicity in an evil of which one has definite knowledge."

The Other Face of Love
by Miriam Pollard
Crossroad, $17.95, 179 pp.

The conceit of Pollard's book is to find in Speer's prison experience an analogy to her own monastic life: Both have fixed hours, long periods of silence, and regular work; both exact celibacy, asceticism about food, clothing, etc., obedience to superiors, and detachment from the world. Speer, in his diaries, spends a good deal of time wrestling with the enormity of his crimes, guilt in relationship to Christian faith, and the need to acknowledge the consequences of one's actions. The issues Pollard raises are whether we can accept such sentiments at their face value and if the mercy of God exceeds the enormous crimes of the Third Reich.

What makes this book so powerful as an exercise in spiritual reflection (besides Pollard's gifts as a writer) is its freedom from abstraction. Pollard takes a "hard case" and asks: Is mercy to be found here? How does Christ shine forth? These questions are asked against the background of a silent chorus of the murdered. Did God give us twenty years to repent our sins? they ask. If Speer is an exemplary case, where do we stand in this spiritual calculus?

Pollard does not address the victims directly, but no one can read her book without turning to them. This adds a dimension to her writing: It goes beyond the emotions to challenge also our power of imagination. After Speer had finished his sentence, he met a survivor of the camps at a reception. She said that she would have to leave, because of his presence, and hoped that he would forgive her decision. Speer replied that it was he who needed forgiveness and added, "I understand better than you think I do." If that is truly the case, then Pollard's great faith in the mercy of God may not be misplaced at all. But can we imagine it?

Paul Harris is a British disciple of the late John Main (died 1982), the Benedictine monk who did so much to teach contemplative prayer. Since 1947 Harris has collected prayers, aphorisms, ob-

The Fire of Silence and Stillness
edited by Paul Harris
Templegate, $14.95, 230 pp.

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servations, and scriptural verses relating to the life of prayer and spiritual advancement. This volume (first published in the U.K.) presents his collection in twelve thematic chapters.

Harris does not think that his book is for reading in large doses; he envisions a careful reader looking, perhaps, at only a page or even a part of a page per day — a sort of *lectio divina*.

Many of the selections come from standard authors (the Desert Fathers, the contemplative writers, modern spiritual writers like Bede Griffiths, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, John Main, *et al.*), but there are surprising sources as well (D.H. Lawrence, George Bernard Shaw). The selections also include many non-Christian sources, especially from Buddhist literature. The volume concludes with a helpful index of persons cited, but a biographical blurb on some of the lesser-known authors would have been appreciated.

Readers of these notes know of my weakness for these kinds of anthologies. They make wonderful books just to "keep around" for when one is too distracted or too tired to read a lengthy monograph; one can simply open to a page at random. I keep a whole series of such books (mainly anthologies of prayers) on my desk for precisely such moments. This packed book, modestly priced, will serve nicely for languid afternoons, or as a starter for busy days. □

Lawrence S. Cunningham *teaches theology and chairs the department at the University of Notre Dame.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

than the status quo.

We may have been remiss, however, in not dealing over the years with the topic of penalties. On this subject most of the centrist prolife leadership has been extremely moderate, clearly eschewing any penalties for mothers and never suggesting penalties for abortionists comparable to penalties for murder. Is this view incoherent, or in keeping with a sound awareness of the limits of the criminal sanction?

There are prochoice rhetoricians who rejoice when abortion opponents apply their principles in an "absolutist" fashion, without distinctions, exceptions, or readiness to compromise, but who, when faced with more nuanced positions, seize them as opportunities to make debaters' points about inconsistency.

We hope that Sister Fiedler's questions are not offered in that spirit.

Matchmaker Moy Moy

I've had the pleasure of spending some time in India and have been concerned about the huge number of orphans there—55.5 million under fourteen—so I was very pleased by Jo McGowan's "Moy Moy Seals the Bargain" [May 9], and want to thank you for publishing it. One wishes the grandmother's experience as recounted by Ms. McGowan could be replicated for people all across India, particularly those in leadership positions.

There are, of course, very real and legitimate concerns about religion and other factors, but these can be addressed. India's current laws and regulations have the effect of depriving children and would-be parents alike of the joy that could be theirs.

In any case, what better way to summarize how adoption melts hearts and barriers, whether in India or elsewhere, than by describing Moy Moy's impact on one elderly lady.

WILLIAM PIERCE
Washington, D.C.

The writer is president of the National Council for Adoption.

Protest still costly

I began my review of *Disarmed and Dangerous*, Murray Polner and Jim O'Grady's book on Daniel and Philip Berrigan [April 25], with the story of a February 1997 Plowshares action in Maine, after which a state court judge called Philip Berrigan "a moral giant, the conscience of a generation." I fear I may have left readers with the feeling that courts have grown benign in dealing with antinuclear protesters.

Nothing could be further from the truth. A week later a federal judge sent Berrigan, Tom Lewis-Borbely, and four others to jail. On May 7, after a brief trial in which they were not allowed to present their necessity defense, they were found guilty of damaging government property and of conspiracy. One posted bond, the others remain in jail; all face sentences of up to fifteen years in prison and $500,000 in fines.

Now that the nuclear danger is past, why persist in protest, one might ask. Well, multiple nuclear dangers in fact remain, ranging from "loose nukes" to possible strikes with low-yield weapons against "outlaw" states. The protesters' target, the *USS Sullivans*, one of fifty-seven Aegis-class destroyers scheduled to be built at a billion dollars each, carries "enough firepower to incinerate a continent," as Philip put it. Considerable treasure is still being spent to keep the nuclear arsenal up-to-date and ready for use. Nuclear dominance, not abolition, seems the operative objective. And arms in general provide a high-profit industry in which we now have many competitors in this exciting global marketplace. But our attention seems to be elsewhere. So some choose to pursue this particular truth, and the cost is still high.

The group can be reached through Prince of Peace Plowshares, c/o Peace and Justice Office, 1 Pleasant Street, Portland, Maine 04101. Tom Borbely-Lewis and his family, Andrea and five-year-old Nora, live in Worcester, where they share themselves and their art with their poor neighbors at Emma House, 136 Austin Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01609. It is lonely without Tom. Prayers, letters, and material support are welcome.

DAVID O'BRIEN
Worcester, Mass.

The writer is Loyola Professor of Roman Catholic Studies at the College of the Holy Cross.

That was no canard

Discussing Daniel Goldhagen's account of the Holocaust ["The Goldhagen Riddle," May 9], Lawrence Douglas writes: "In an apoplectic re-

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view in *First Things*, Richard John Neuhaus railed against *Hitler's Willing Executioners* as an 'incoherent, hateful, and dishonest tract,' faulting it for its claim that 'anti-Semitism has nothing to do with Jews' and for failing to acknowledge the reasonableness of the perception of Jewish responsibility for Weimar's culture of 'defeatism and decadence.'" Other critics, says Douglas, "fortunately have not used the book as a pretext to revive, however unwittingly, such canards."

A canard is a false charge. I criticized Goldhagen for paying no attention to Jews except as the objects of irrational German hatred. The criticism was entirely witting and is entirely true.

As for Weimar, I was citing established scholars such as Istvan Deak, Harold Poor, Walter Laqueur, and Paul Johnson, and I wrote, "These writers are not 'blaming the victim' when they note the ways in which the victimizer was able to exploit the reality and exaggerated perception of Jews in Weimar....In the absence of [this] history it is impossible to explain the rise of Hitler." I am sure that these writers also knew exactly what they were saying, and that what they said is true. So much for canards.

Mr. Douglas's evaluation of the book itself employs language such as "maliciously overblown," "strident self-righteousness," "crucially flawed," and "inflammatory rhetoric." He also notes Goldhagen's dishonesty in changing his argument for German audiences.

I described the book as incoherent, hateful, and dishonest. Between Mr. Douglas's judgment and mine I am quite prepared to split the difference, if there is one. I do not say that Mr. Douglas's article is apoplectic but, with respect to my criticism of Goldhagen, it is, however unwittingly, a serious misrepresentation.

(REV.) RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
New York, N.Y.

The writer is president of The Institute of Religion and Public Life and editor-in-chief of its journal, First Things.

The reviewer replies:

The small matters first: I did not, Richard Neuhaus's selective quotation to the contrary, characterize the argument of *Hitler's Willing Executioners* as "maliciously overblown"; rather, I wrote that critics of the book, such as Father Neuhaus, have made this claim. I also did not claim any "dishonesty" on Goldhagen's part in "changing his argument for German audiences." Instead, I observed that during the German book tour, Goldhagen made a point of emphasizing the difference between today's Germany and the Third Reich, an argument mentioned in his book only in a footnote.

These points might be minor, as Neuhaus seems to think they are. Yet they are emblematic of Neuhaus's style of argumentation, and in this respect shed light on our more serious disagreements. For just as Neuhaus has taken my words and given them his own polemical twist, he has similarly appropriated the works of outstanding historians such as Paul Johnson and Walter Laqueur to support his offensive argument. It is one thing to chronicle the cultural and political contributions of Jews to Weimar—as did the authors cited—and another to claim, as does Neuhaus, that "Hitler was able to exploit the perception of Jewish responsibility for defeatism and decadence because the perception was there to be exploited, and was not unrelated to reality." Sounds like blaming the victim to me.

LAWRENCE DOUGLAS

Ordinary heroes

Daniel Goldhagen's study [*Hitler's Willing Executioners*, reviewed by Lawrence Douglas, May 9] has the effect of condemning a whole people, because it ignores the Resistance (*Wiederstand*). While politically ineffective, thousands upon thousands of ordinary (and extraordinary) Germans did resist Hitler until the final moments of the war. Many thousands were executed, some for even the slightest appearance of resistance. One mother who wrote to her soldier son on the Eastern front, "I wish this awful war would end," was executed for undermining the war effort. Others died because they sought to overthrow Hitler and establish a democratic regime.

Yes, ordinary people were executioners, but ordinary people also did all they could to end the slaughter. This also must be said, especially in our time.

PAUL K. CHAPMAN
New York, N.Y.

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MY THIRD-WORLD DEBT

Peter J. Donaldson

I lived in Thailand for almost ten years, yet many people—both Thai and *farang* (as all Westerners there are known)—would tell you that I remained almost totally unaffected by my sojourn. My spoken Thai is rudimentary, and I never mastered the rules of daily life that govern such seemingly simple things as whom to *wai*—that is, to whom to display the traditional Thai greeting of hands with palms together held high.

As I grew older and therefore more deserving of respect, the number of people who should have *waied* me before I *waied* them increased. Yet I frequently embarrassed myself and others by *waiing* too soon, surprising young professors who had held off *waiing*, thinking that a handshake might be more appropriate or that no gesture at all would best suit the circumstances.

But despite such inadequacies, Thailand shaped me in ways both profound and incidental.

I arrived as prickly as any newcomer, but over time I learned something of the common Thai strategy for coping with the unpleasantnesses of daily life, an approach very different from the relentlessly cantankerous style favored by the New Yorkers of my youth.

The Thais have a deeply rooted inclination to look for a way around interpersonal problems, to be *kreng jai*, to worry about causing trouble, and to be watchful of other people's feelings; to say, in a celebrated phrase, "*mai pen rai*," "never mind," and to move on. They realize that nothing is often a good thing to do and almost always the best thing to say when confronted with a slight.

When my friend Pramote Prasartkul was in a serious automobile accident, the people who brought him to the hospital relieved him of his wallet. Pramote said, "*Mai pen rai*. I paid taxi fare to the hospital. So what?" I never heard him complain, as I would have, that the theft added insult to his considerable injuries.

When I arrived in Thailand my values were relentlessly egalitarian. During the first days of my stay, I carried cartons of books into my university office, working alongside movers the school had hired to do the job. Today, I'd let the movers do the work. The well-ordered hierarchy of the Thai cultural map recognizes that to do others' work is often to demean them.

Once I and an older friend, someone I address (again following that map) as "*Pi*," or "older sister," were on the same flight from Bangkok to New Delhi. I had a business-class ticket. *Pi* Yaw was booked to travel in economy. We exchanged seats because younger brothers defer to older sisters.

Acceptance of hierarchy is in part an acceptance of the way things are. If I bargained and paid 50 *baht*—about U.S. $2—for some fruit and later found the same fruit for 10 *baht*, I'd complain and feel cheated. In the same situation, my Thai friends would never grumble. They'd think, "What a great deal," and buy more fruit.

At times, this acceptance allows a bad situation to get worse. Thai experts have visited cities throughout the world to study ways of managing Bangkok's traffic problems. But the traffic remains wretched, not because of a lack of possible solutions, but because of an acceptance of the way things are and of *kreng jai*: The city government is unwilling to cause any of Bangkok's elite citizens trouble or inconvenience, say, by restricting the use of their cars.

Many of the Thai traits I enjoyed most are evident in the propensity of people in Thailand to smile. Thailand is called the "Land of Smiles" for a reason. Thais smile when they are amused, of course, but they also smile when they are embarrassed, or when they are bargaining, or as a way of saying thank you, or indeed when they are in doubt about what to say or do.

I traveled frequently between Bangkok and New Delhi. When I arrived at the Delhi airport, my inclination was to use my Thai manners and smile to ease each potentially awkward situation. I smiled at the immigration official, at the customs officer, at the man in the taxi kiosk. Each of them would look at me as if to say, "You are a dimwit." The characteristic Indian way of dealing with uncertainty and possible embarrassment is to glower.

The important part of Thailand's influence is that my cultural map has been altered. I have become more *kreng jai*, more inclined to say *mai pen rai*. I appreciate the accord that social hierarchies can provide, and I'm more inclined to smile and accept the ways things are.

I have changed since I first arrived in Bangkok, and Thailand has changed as well. The economy has been growing like gangbusters. Per capita income has increased almost ten times over the past twenty-five years, and—at least among the urban middle class who have been able to take advantage of this growth—an optimistic worldview has become pervasive. The positive aspects of Thai development were a delight for those of us who lived through the country's economic transformation. But for me, Thailand's transformation is less important than my own. □

While he lived in Bangkok, **Peter J. Donaldson** *was the director of the Population Council program in Asia. He is now president of the Population Reference Bureau in Washington, D.C.*

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